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Stefan Rinke
Nino Vallen (eds.)

Distributive Struggle and the Self in the Early Modern Iberian World



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Abbreviations

- AGI:** Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain
- AGN:** Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Mexico
- AGS:** Archivo General de Simancas, Valladolid, Spain
- AHN:** Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Spain
- AHU:** Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon, Portugal
- ANC:** Archivo Nacional de Cuba, La Habana, Cuba
- AOHH:** Archivo de la Oficina del Historiador de La Habana,
La Habana, Cuba
- BNP:** Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Lisbon, Portugal
- HAG:** Historical Archives of Goa, Goa, India
- HC:** Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, *Historia de la nación chichimeca*
(ca. 1625)
- XCHR:** Xavier Centre for Historical Research, Goa, India

Introduction

In the autumn of 1610, the Royal Council of the Indies sought a candidate for the vacant episcopal seat in Venezuela. One of the candidates for the office was the Augustinian friar Juan de Zapata y Sandoval. According to the report the councilors had sent to King Philip III, Zapata was born in 1545 in Mexico and had taken his vows at the age of 25.¹ He had temporarily held a professorship at the local university, teaching liberal arts and theology. After this appointment ended, he had travelled to Castile, where he became a professor, rector, and examiner at the Colegio de San Gabriel in Valladolid. Zapata was well-known, the report continues, for being a spirited preacher. He had also worked as a consultant and qualifier (*calificador*) for the Inquisition in Valladolid and had held multiple offices in the Augustinian Order. In addition, he had written and published an acclaimed book on distributive justice and was teaching liberal arts and theology at the University of Sigüenza. The councilors further note that the friar was the grandson of Pedro de Sandoval, one of the first conquistadores of New Spain, and doctor Ruiz de Villanueva, who had been an appellate judge on Mexico's First Audiencia. Finally, they observe, the friar knew the "language of the *indios*."²

The short biographical description that the councilors and their secretaries compiled was typical for these so-called *consultas*: written assessments prepared to present to the monarch three, four, or sometimes more nominees deemed worthy of the position that had to be filled. For each candidate, the reports provided information about their social status (*calidad*), skills or specialized knowledge (*partes*), and the services (*méritos*) they had rendered during their lives. Through these appraisals, the monarch would be able to acquaint himself

¹ The document has been described in Arturo Ramírez Trejo: Juan Zapata y Sandoval: *De iustitia distributiva*. El rescate de su obra en defensa de los indígenas de la Nueva España. In: Gerardo Ramírez Vidal and Hilda Juliera Valdés García (eds.): *Entre Roma y Nueva España: homenaje a Roberto Heredia Correa*. 50 años de docencia. Mexico City 2011, pp. 349-350.

² *Ibidem*.

with the candidates and make a – this was the ideal – well-informed decision about who he believed was fit for the office.³ Although such biographical sketches appear to be relatively straightforward, their simplicity is deceptive. Descriptions like the one presented for Zapata were often the culmination of a long and painstaking process, involving not only a wide variety of actors but also considerable efforts by those looking for royal favors to influence the image that the councilors would eventually produce.

The making of Zapata y Sandoval's self-image had already begun some years earlier. In 1607, the Colegio de San Gabriel sent a request to the Inquisition of Mexico to investigate the friar's purity of blood (*limpieza de sangre*).⁴ In order to enter the prestigious college and join the ranks of its professorate, Zapata was required to prove that he was of good lineage (*linaje*) and descended from honorable Christian ancestors. Although doubts were raised during the inquisitorial process that followed about Zapata's purity, the eventual outcome was positive and helped the friar to get his relationship to two of New Spain's meritorious (*beneméritos*) on record. Around the same time that these inquisitorial procedures had been set in motion in Mexico, the friar also must have already been working on the book that the councilors mentioned, which was published as *De iustitia distributiva et acceptione personarum ei opposita disceptatio* in Valladolid in 1609. In this erudite legal and theological treatise, Zapata sought to answer the question of how the American episcopal seats were to be distributed in accordance with the principles of distributive justice.⁵ At first sight, the writing of this treatise would appear to be unrelated to the inquisitorial process that was conducted in Mexico. Yet both were part of this American-born creole's struggle to rise through the ranks. The texts that were produced contributed, each in their own way, to the fashioning of an image of himself as a person worthy of being appointed as a bishop in the Indies.

³ On the role of the claim of the king being informed and possessing "complete knowledge" in legitimizing his decisions, see Arndt Brendecke: *Imperium und Empirie: Funktionen des Wissens in der spanischen Kolonialherrschaft*. Cologne 2009, pp. 73-85.

⁴ AGN, México, Indiferente virreinal, C. 5104, Exp. 10, "Contestación a la petición sobre la averiguación de limpieza de sangre del padre Fray Juan Zapata y Sandoval maestro del convento de San Gabriel. Valladolid. 1607." AGN, México, Inquisición, 282, Exp. 8, "Información de la genealogía y limpieza de linaje de Fray Juan de Zapata y Sandoval, Agustino. 1608."

⁵ Juan Zapata y Sandoval: *De iustitia distributiva et acceptione personarum ei opposita disceptatio*. Ed. Carlos Baciero et al. Madrid 2008.

The production of such images of a deserving self were crucial to the struggles over the distribution of royal grace and favor in the early modern Iberian world. The present volume, which grew out of a workshop held at the Freie Universität Berlin in the Fall of 2017, examines interactions between distributive struggles and the fashioning of the self from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. The individual chapters discuss how subjects of the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns on the Peninsula, in Africa, Asia, and the Americas – men and women, *conversos*, creoles, *indios*, and Hindu merchants – fashioned their self-images and identities. Grappling with the challenges and opportunities produced by Iberian globalization, such actors adopted varying strategies to convince authorities and members of their communities that they were worthy of certain benefits or to refute allegations of not being so.

The contributors to this volume explore strategies of self-fashioning through a series of case studies that, taken together, are meant to deepen our understanding of a particular form of early modern autobiographical culture that became diffused around the world in the context of imperial expansion. The Iberian empires present a particularly fruitful ground for such a study, as Spain and Portugal's absolute monarchies produced vast quantities of written documentation that today provide historians with unique (auto-)biographical information about otherwise unknown individuals who played an essential role in the trans-continental and transcultural interactions that defined processes of empire-building and early globalization. By examining the ways in which these men and women positioned themselves in an increasingly mobile and interconnected world, this book aims to further enrich traditional narratives concerning the emergence of a new self-consciousness during the early modern period. As the editors of this volume, we argue that, for many contemporaries, such an awareness of their own individuality meant first and foremost knowing how to fashion a deserving self – a representation of themselves, that is, that developed at the intersection of their sense of entitlement, social norms, and the practices that determined how royal grace and favor were being distributed throughout these empires.

THE EARLY MODERN SELF IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Historians and literary scholars have long been intrigued by the strong rise of the awareness of the self in early modern European societies. Pioneer work by Rudolf Dekker and Winfried Schulze has been followed by a vast scholarship studying early textual expressions of self-consciousness.⁶ Many of these studies have questioned Jacob Burckhardt's idea of the Renaissance being a period in which revolutionary new ways of thinking about the individual developed.⁷ Still, most of them agree that the quantity and variety of texts written in the first person rose explosively from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In addition to members of the aristocracy and clergy, bureaucrats, soldiers, pilots, merchants, doctors, adventurers, and women began to write accounts of their personal acts, thoughts, and sentiments. During the past three decades, the study of documents in which an "ego is intentionally or unintentionally revealed or disclosed" has enriched historical research, offering individual perspectives onto past worlds and endowing ordinary lives with agency and texture.⁸ Ego documents have also provided new information about groups that traditionally had been ignored by historiography, such as women, religious minorities, children, and slaves.⁹ Furthermore, engagement with varying forms of self-writing has contributed towards the opening of new fields of research concerning, for instance, the relationship between truth and fiction, memory, time, self-representation, identity, and the phenomenon of the ego document itself.

Scholars have provided a wide-ranging array of explanations for why this first-person perspective became so important during the early modern period.

⁶ Rudolf Dekker (ed.): *Egodocuments and History. Autobiographical Writing in its Social Context Since the Middle Ages*. Hilversum 2002; Winfried Schulze: *Ego-Dokumente – Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte? Vorüberlegungen für die Tagung ‚Ego-Dokumente‘*. In: Schulze (ed.): *Ego-Dokumente*. Berlin 1996, pp. 11-30. For a useful overview of this scholarship, see the Dossier *De la autobiografía a los ego-documentos: un forum abierto*. In: *Cultura escrita & sociedad* 1 (2005), pp. 15-122.

⁷ Compare for example: Peter Burke: *Representations of the Self from Petrarch to Descartes*. In: Roy Porter (ed.): *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the present*. London/New York 2002, pp. 17-28.

⁸ Jacques Presser cited in Arianne Baggerman and Rudolf Dekker: "De gevaarlijkste van alle bronnen": Egodocumenten: nieuwe wegen en perspectieven. In: *TSEG/The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History* 1, no. 4 (2004), p. 8.

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 11-13.

One factor that undoubtedly contributed to this development was the growing literacy rate in Europe in general and on the Iberian Peninsula in particular.¹⁰ Urbanization, the changing needs of an expanding merchant class, and increasing competition over offices in the professionalizing local and state government provided incentives to learn how to read and write. At the same time, the introduction of the printing press reduced book prices, allowing several groups to buy reading materials who had not been able to afford them before.¹¹ Together with the growing number of literates, text production increased and with it the production of ego-documents as well.

Although changing literacy rates certainly bolstered the quantitative rise in self-writing, this factor does not entirely explain why a personal perspective became so appealing to contemporaries. Such interests appear to have been partly prompted by the increasingly positive valuation of experiential knowledge in early modern societies. Claims about the truth and the veracity of knowledge were no longer solely based on authoritative texts. Instead, contemporaries were granting more and more importance to experience and eyewitness accounts. The rise of such ideals was closely related to developments in the realm of law, where testimonies of honorable members of the community were key to legal truth finding.¹²

Actors involved in legal processes were obliged to take a first-person perspective as they appeared before judges and scribes, either in the role of the plaintiff, the accused, or the witness. As these legal practices became more common, people started to apply a similar principle in other types of writings. Exemplary of this tendency are the travel reports arriving to Europe from the New World and other parts of the globe. Captains, discoverers, conquerors, travelers, and friars explained that they wrote using the “I” form, in order to convince their readers of the veracity of their accounts.¹³

¹⁰ Compare for instance: Miguel Martínez: *Front Lines: Soldiers' Writing in the Early Modern Hispanic World*. Philadelphia 2016, pp. 12-53.

¹¹ J.N.H. Lawrance: *The Spread of Lay Literacy in Late Medieval Castile*. In: *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 62, no. 1 (1985), pp. 79-94.

¹² Carlos Alberto González Sánchez: *Homo viator, homo scribens. Cultura gráfica, información y gobierno en la expansión atlántica (siglos XV-XVII)*. Madrid 2007, p. 65.

¹³ Kathleen Ann Myers: *Fernández de Oviedo's Chronicle of America: A New History for a New World*. Austin 2007, pp. 41-62. The historiography on ego documents from the Indies is extensive, see for instance: Werner Stangl: *Un cuarto de siglo con Cartas privadas de*

Another explanation scholars have provided for the formation of new forms of subjectivity concerns the growing significance ascribed to self-knowledge as constitutive for the formation of virtuous men and women. Under the influence of Greek and Roman as well as early Christian authorities, the search for knowledge about one's inner nature became a key theme in early modern writing.¹⁴ Although the pursuit of self-knowledge was generally inspired in the first place by religious motivations, social objectives gradually became equally important. Self-scrutiny was deemed essential to the self-control and self-transformation through which individuals sought to adapt their public *personae* to the standards of behavior of the time. Autobiographical writings of the time reflect the dialogues by means of which individual actors sought to mask and control a particular self-image, in order to comply with socially and culturally defined norms.

This interplay between individuals and society has sometimes been understood as a masking of the true self – one's real personality operating behind a carefully constructed façade. Yet, in recent decades, scholars have questioned such an understanding of a fixed and essential self. According to Stephen Greenblatt, the self is invented in the interactions between an individual and society. Through self-fashioning, he argues, people craft “a distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of receiving and behaving.”¹⁵ As the contributions in this volume make clear, Greenblatt's concept of self-fashioning can also be applied to the study of the strategies of tactical self-promotion of the subjects of the Iberian Crowns.¹⁶

emigrantes a Indias. Prácticas y perspectivas de ediciones de cartas transatlánticas en el Imperio español. In: Anuario de Estudios Americanos 70, no. 2 (2013), pp. 703-736; Patricia Escandón: Cartas, diarios y memoriales del período colonial como material historiográfico. In: Latinoamérica. Anuario de Estudios Latinoamericanos 33 (2002), pp. 203-216; Ulrich Mücke: Introducción. Escritura autobiográfica e historia en Hispanoamérica. In: Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas 47 (2010), pp. 1-9.

¹⁴ Charles Taylor: *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge 1989, pp. 177-184; Jeremy Robbins: *Arts of Perception: The Epistemological Mentality of the Spanish Baroque, 1580–1720*. London 2014, pp. 157-176; Rachel Scott: *Celestina and the Human Condition in Early Modern Spain and Italy*. Woodbridge, Rochester 2017, pp. 29-64.

¹⁵ Stephen J. Greenblatt: *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago 1980, p. 9.

¹⁶ Compare also: Laura Delbrugge (ed.): *Self-Fashioning and Assumptions of Identity in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*. Leiden 2015.

Another factor contributing to the rise of self-writing that scholars have discussed is a growing desire among the elites and growing urban middle classes to control memory regarding their actions and lives. Rudolf Dekker has observed how diary writing was linked to the spread of clocks and watches, as both phenomena reflect contemporaries' attempts to get a grip on time.¹⁷ Yet, in late medieval and early modern communities, which were obsessed with honor and fame, practices of memorialization were also key to negotiations regarding the social order.¹⁸ People constantly sought to leave accounts of their origins, their formation, the lessons they learned, their aspirations, and even failures. For it was through these accounts that they sought to affirm themselves or justify their position in society. By materializing their own accounts of their lives and the roles they played in certain events, actors tried to make sure that other members of the community would remember both.

One more key development often mentioned in histories about the emergence of subjectivities is the formation of the modern state apparatus. As has been mentioned above, newly created institutions produced an immense amount of autobiographical materials. The oldest of these institutions was the Inquisition. During the inquisitorial process, information about the lives and behavior of individuals was produced that served not only to punish heretics but also to legitimize the exclusion of individuals from social opportunities or benefits. In the process of determining whether a person was a true Christian, clean of any blemishes produced by Jewish or Muslim ancestry or forbidden religious customs, an account was produced of their lineages, their publicly recognized identity and deeds, and, at times, their physical characteristics. Thus, as Richard Kagan has noted, life stories were recorded of those who would otherwise have been forgotten, were it not for the interrogations of the Inquisition.¹⁹

¹⁷ Rudolf Dekker: *Tijd meten en dagboek schrijven in de zeventiende eeuw*. In TSEG/The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History 1, no. 4 (2004), pp. 23-39.

¹⁸ Nicholas Spadaccini and Jenaro Taléns (eds.): *Autobiography in Early Modern Spain*. Hispanic Issues 2. Minneapolis, MN 1988, p. 16; Judith Pollmann: *Memory in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800*. New York/Oxford 2017.

¹⁹ Richard Kagan: *Inquisitorial Inquiries: Brief Lives of Secret Jews and other Heretics*. Baltimore 2004, p. xi. Pierre Chaunu referred to something similar when, in a study of the American Inquisition, he noted that "our aim is simply to give this institution something of a human face [...]." Pierre Chaunu: *Faits et méthodes: inquisition et vie quotidienne dans l'Amérique espagnole au XVII^e siècle*. In: *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 11, no. 2 (1956), p. 230.

However, such bureaucratic processes not only preserved from oblivion information about the lives of common men, they also turned them into legal subjects. As Bernard Siegert has pointed out in a study of the procedures by means of which the Spanish Crown granted travel permission to its subjects, the pretexts of royal decrees and the state's particular needs for information determined who one can say that one is, where one comes from, and how one lives.²⁰ The judicial dialogue that took place within this and other bureaucratic contexts thus contributed to the formation of early modern subjectivities.

As this brief overview should make clear, the early modern self is no longer considered to be, in the Cartesian sense, a coherent unity separated from the world. Nor is early modern self-consciousness deemed to be merely the result of a turn inward toward the individual and the private. Instead, most current scholarship agrees that the self is produced at the intersection of various practices, habitus, examples, institutions, and intellectual notions of personhood. Notions of the self were also very much collective and public, crafted in a dialogue with various external audiences in mind.²¹ This is particularly true for the autobiographical culture that this book investigates – a culture that has only recently attracted the attention of historians and literary scholars – which produced its own ideas of selfhood and forms of self-writing.

FASHIONING THE SELF IN DISTRIBUTIVE STRUGGLES

During the early modern period, Iberian monarchs, their councilors, and subjects constantly struggled with the problem of how to distribute society's benefits in a 'just' way. Debates concerning this complex question were shaped to a large extent by a set of medieval ideas and practices. At the center of this framework was the ideal that the monarch should act as a distributor of opportunities and wealth, providing to each of his vassals what they deserved.²² In medieval law and political theory, such an ideal acquired prominence as a result

²⁰ Bernhard Siegert: *Passagiere und Papiere: Schreibakte auf der Schwelle zwischen Spanien und Amerika*. München 2006, p. 48.

²¹ Compare: John Jeffries Martin: *Myths of Renaissance Individualism*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire/New York 2004.

²² For a more detailed genealogy of the development of the Iberian "economy of booty" and the ideals underpinning it, see: Vitus Huber: *Beute und Conquista: Die politische Ökonomie der Eroberung Neuspaniens*. Frankfurt/New York 2018, pp. 43-77.

of the shared interests that Iberian monarchs and their vassals had in bestowing distributive powers onto the former. For medieval kings, the possibility to reward privileges or honors was essential for gaining their vassals' loyalty and mobilizing the manpower needed to defend, administer, and extend their authority. During the Reconquista and the subsequent process of the consolidation of the Iberian kingdoms, they granted privileges, such as *solariegos*, *beneficios*, *behetrías*, *fueros*, *mercedes de tierra*, *asientos*, *pensiones*, *mayorazgos*, *títulos nobilitarios*, as well as a wide variety of offices, habits of the military orders, annuities, and monopolies, to those who were colonizing frontier territories.²³

In the context of this overseas expansion, ideas about the mutual obligations between monarchs and vassals were transferred to other parts of the world. Explorers, conquerors, settlers, and other members of colonial societies, both of European and non-European descent, expected to be remunerated for their services to the Crown. Iberian monarchs, in turn, sought to comply with such demands, as they derived much of their authority from their role as distributors of favors and arbitrators in distributive conflicts. In order to help them in fulfilling these duties, the Iberian Crowns expanded their legal and distributive apparatuses. While the *Cámara de Castilla* and the Council of Orders (*Consejo de las Órdenes*) dealt with requests for royal grace and favor from subjects on the Peninsula, newly created institutional bodies like the Council of the Indies or Portugal's India House (*Casa da Índia*) did so for requests coming from overseas.²⁴ By offering their subjects the possibility to present themselves to the king through increasingly standardized forms of legal writing – known as *relaciones de méritos y servicios* and *informaciones de oficio y parte* – the Iberian Crowns maintained, as Brendecke has noted, the appearance of complying with the rules of distributive justice.²⁵

During the past two decades, a handful of scholars have begun to explore how new forms of self-writing developed in the context of this apparatus. One of the first to do so was Scottish historian Murdo J. MacLeod, who observed that

²³ On the distribution of royal grace and favor in Castile, see also Salustiano de Dios: *Gracias, merced y patronazgo real: la Cámara de Castilla entre 1474-1530*. Madrid 1993.

²⁴ For a Portuguese perspective, see the work of Fernanda Olival: *La economía de la merced en la cultura política del Portugal moderno*. In: Aranda Pérez, Francisco José, and José D. Rodrigue (eds.): *De Re Publica Hispaniae: una vindicación de la cultura política en los reinos ibéricos en la primera modernidad*. Madrid 2008, pp. 389-408.

²⁵ Brendecke: *Imperium und Empirie*, pp. 54-57.

thousands of *relaciones de méritos y servicios* have been preserved in the Spanish archives. Although MacLeod points out that, to “the modern observer the *relaciones* – straight self-promotion and puffery – are suspect and even ridiculous,”²⁶ to contemporaries these documents undoubtedly were important. According to MacLeod, the main reason for being so was that subjects of the Spanish Crown used them to present their merits and services, using both as a form of “capital” that served “to ‘buy’ a better position from the king or the viceroy.”²⁷ Although he did not pursue the matter of the self explicitly, MacLeod’s work nonetheless shows how in the Spanish systems of career advancement, promotion, and reward people were supposed to produce a particular kind of ego document in order to offer their capital to the authorities and receive their rewards in return.

In more recent years, others have explored more systematically the link between the *relaciones* and the formation of new subjectivities. Rosa María Gregori Roig has concluded that the *relaciones de méritos y servicios* describe via detailed accounts the “avatars” of individuals and considers these documents to be brief but detailed chronicles of individual lives, through which their meritorious behavior is highlighted. Like Siegert, Gregori Roig stresses that this knowledge about the individual is controlled and regulated, written down by an official and converted into the proper form of existing models.²⁸ Robert Folger has further deepened our understanding of the link between the state’s distributive apparatus and the fashioning of the self in a series of studies of Spanish institutions involved in the distribution of royal favor.²⁹ According to Folger, this economy of favor (*merced*) functioned through the production of a massive amount of documentation, including petitions, questionnaires, written reports of

²⁶ Murdo J. MacLeod: Self-Promotion: The *Relaciones de Méritos y Servicios* and their Historical and Political Interpretation. In: Colonial Latin American Historical Review 7, no. 1 (1998), pp. 25-42.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 28.

²⁸ Rosa María Gregori Roig: Representación pública del individuo. Relaciones de méritos y servicios en el Archivo General de Indias (siglos XVII-XVIII). In: Antonio Castillo Gómez and Verónica Sierra Blas (eds.): El legado de Mnemosyne: las escrituras del yo a través del tiempo. Gijón 2007, p. 378.

²⁹ Robert Folger: Writing as Poaching: Interpellation and Self-Fashioning in Colonial *Relaciones de méritos y servicios*. Leiden/Boston 2011; Robert Folger: Picaresque and Bureaucracy: Lazarrillo De Tormes. Newark, Delaware 2009.

the Councils' secretaries, *consultas*, and the *mercedes* or *cartas de privilegios*. In order to proceed through these procedures successfully, subjects of the Spanish Crown strategically adopted and appropriated an authoritative "dispositif" to fashion more or less fictitious self-images of a legible and "deserving subject."³⁰ As Folger has argued, in this act of interpellation, individuals recognized the authority of the state while, at the same time, negotiating between conflicting models and perceptions of their worthiness.

The work of MacLeod, Gregori Roig, and Folger reveals the importance of the dynamics of the distributive system for the development of the early modern self. The present volume concurs with the idea that is central to this scholarship: that the political principle of reciprocity between lord and vassal promoted the latter's self-writing. In their efforts to obtain rewards, individuals constantly presented themselves to the king so that he could give to each what was considered their due. Yet the struggle over the distribution of wealth, offices, and honors was not limited to demonstrating one's worthiness through *relaciones de méritos y servicios*. As this volume reveals, these conflicts affected many other areas of society, ranging from the realm of law to that of poetry and arts and from history writing to the natural sciences. We hold that, in order to understand the relationship between distributive struggle and the self, it is insufficient to focus only on those practices designed to bestow rewards on the king's vassals. Instead, our proposal is to focus on a logic of assessment that appears to have played a role in all of these contexts. Such a logic not only shaped the bureaucratic procedures to which individuals subjected themselves, as they submitted their petitions for rewards, but also permeated a wide variety of practices by means of which contemporaries sought to influence how wealth, offices, and honors were distributed.

Why did this logic of assessment become so important? Most likely because contemporaries used it to grapple with one of the most complicated problems that the distributive process raised: finding the right balance between a desirable degree of social mobility and the static order of the highly stratified early modern societies. During the Late Middle Ages, canonists, legal specialists, and political theorists had proposed different solutions for this problem. One line of reasoning that acquired growing influence from the twelfth century on, and which sought to undermine the position of a hereditary aristocracy, proposed

³⁰ Folger: *Writing as Poaching*, p. 34.

that the monarch ought to assess his vassals' inner nature by reading their complexions and inclinations.³¹ Another line that builds further on this principle was developed in the *Siete Partidas*. Written to legitimize the monarch's absolute powers, this thirteenth-century legal codex claimed for the monarch the right to move people to a position in society that corresponded to their divinely given talents, as became visible either in one's lineage, good qualities, or services.³² Both traditions had a strong influence on the late medieval and early modern notions that held that the distributive process was 'just' when the distributive authority had knowledge about a given person, so that he could give to each what was due them. While the question of what factors defined what share of the common good a person deserved was controversially discussed – Zapata y Sandoval was but one of many persons to do so – the idea that the assessment process itself was a pillar of distributive justice was commonly accepted.³³

This rationale of assessment contributed to a newly emerging awareness of the self, because it was premised upon the possibility of rendering legible an individual's unique characteristics. As the chapters in this book demonstrate, people during the period covered constantly grappled with this dynamic. Some did so in *relaciones de méritos y servicios*, which were designed to make the evaluation process a shared responsibility of members of the community – acting as witnesses asked to confirm the petitioner's self-image – the judge, the councilors, and the king. Others used other kinds of petitions or wrote histories or epic poetry to influence what the people involved in the distributive process thought about the qualities and services of certain individuals or members of their direct families. Again others grappled with the question of their worthiness on a collective level, as they were confronted with unconscious prejudices or conscious attempts to bar certain groups from acquiring benefits. In these con-

³¹ See for example the highly influential *Secreto de los secretos* and *Poridat de las poridades*, which were two distinct translations of the Arab *Kitab sirr al-asrâr*. The first explains how the heavenly bodies can be used to determine a person's inclinations to be a good councilor, whereas the second describes how a person's inclinations could be read through his physical qualities. Pseudo-Aristóteles: *Secreto de los secretos, poridat de las poridades: Versiones castellanas del Pseudo-Aristóteles Secretum Secretorum*, ed. Hugo O. Bizzadri. Valencia 2010, pp. 91-94, pp. 139-57.

³² Las Siete Partidas, 1972: Part. II, Tit. xii, prologue, 93.

³³ As in Zapata y Sandoval's treatise, these discussions often concerned the question of how to balance inherited social status with personal virtue, dignity and merit.

flicts, people's self-assessments of their personal nature were directly influenced by notions of personhood that shaped and sought to explain relationships between individuals and the collectives of which they formed inherent parts.

THE ANTHOLOGY

The book opens with Ingrid Simson's study of two epic texts from the sixteenth century: *La Araucana*, by Alonso de Ercilla, and *La Florida*, by Alonso Gregorio de Escobedo. Ercilla recounts his experiences during the battles between the Spaniards and the Araucanians that took place in Chile in 1557 and 1558, while the Franciscan friar Gregorio de Escobedo tells the story of thirteen missionaries travelling to Florida in 1595. Simson uses Greenblatt's concept of Renaissance self-fashioning to reveal that these texts served to portray the authors as loyal, well-educated, and outstanding vassals of the Crown – one as a perfect soldier, the other as a dedicated missionary. She demonstrates how this highly popular but relatively little-studied genre was used by both authors to make themselves visible in the struggle for attention from the Crown. In the subsequent chapter, Nikolaus Böttcher studies a group of mobile actors battling against discrimination and inquisitorial persecution, examining what the impacts of mobility was on *converso* mentalities. Tracing the global lives of several converted Jews, he describes the restless searching of these New Christians for identities that would allow them either to escape the deeply rooted suspicions of their communities or to improve their social standing within them.

The following two chapters focus on indigenous actors in the viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru and their struggles for recognition and reward. In his study, Richard Herzog examines how Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl used his chronicles in the struggle for the conservation of his family's land rights and titles. Through a detailed reading of the *Sumaria relación de la historia general de esta Nueva España*, he reveals how Alva Ixtlilxochitl established a long genealogy with the Alcolhua of the city of Texcoco which, Herzog contends, is central to Alva Ixtlilxochitl's self-image, as it reaffirmed his own and his family's worthiness. Herzog then explains how the indigenous author's sense of entitlement shaped his sense of socio-political belonging and how this, in turn, influenced his efforts to define the place of Texcoco in the colonial context.

José Cáceres Mardones also focuses on historical consciousness in his chapter on Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's *Nueva crónica y buen gobierno* (1613). Cáceres Mardones tries to understand how this Andean author used the genre of the chronicle in seeking to obliterate the ontological differences between time and space. Referring to the Andean concept of *pacha*, the chapter reveals how Poma de Ayala's plural temporal structure serves to criticize the conditions under which the indigenous population was living. Fashioning himself as a loyal vassal and gentleman – who claimed that he acted for the common good rather than mere personal interests – Guaman Poma presented an alternative colonial and world order, shaped according to the principles of the Andean world view.

Meanwhile, Nino Vallen takes us back to New Spain, at the turn of the seventeenth century, where the viceroyalty saw bitter conflicts over the distribution of secular offices and religious benefits. He examines how the mid-level official Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza sought to influence these struggles by writing his *Sumaria relación de las cosas de la Nueva España*. Vallen argues that Dorantes de Carranza's engagement with the logic of assessment led him to identify with the natural inhabitants of the Americas (both indigenous and creoles), conquistadores, and settlers, while emphasizing at the same time factors that determined why he deserved certain favors more than other members of these groups. Stefan Rinke further explores the role of space in understanding the shaping of a collective sense of belonging among Latin America's creole population during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He discusses how members of this group used textual and artistic representations of cities and landscapes, astrological knowledge, and local saints to demonstrate their uniqueness and worthiness to receive royal benefits.

Delphine Tempère's chapter studies the *relaciones de méritos y servicios* and *información de oficio y parte* produced by military men, royal officials, clergymen, and sailors who served the Spanish Crown in the Philippines. Through an analysis of these standardized legal records, Tempère shows how these men produced autobiographical accounts in which they emphasized their capacity to be mobile and how it defined their roles in the defense and administration of a global empire. The Philippines were an inhospitable place for the Spanish and a frontier area defined by permanent conflict. As a result, new men were constantly required to travel halfway across the globe to serve the king at the other end of the world. Tempère reveals how these men used the

image of being widely travelled, serving as brave soldiers or obedient pastors, in order to express their value for the Crown and empire.

In her chapter, Agata Bloch takes us to the Portuguese empire, examining the often neglected role of women in Portugal's African and Brazilian colonies. Studying petitions for royal justice, she discusses the agency of such women in the legal domain, challenging their traditional role as mothers or wives. Although their petitions reveal little of the self, they do address the question of why the petitioners believed they deserved to be heard and receive royal justice. In this manner, female petitioners opened a space in which they could manifest themselves as strategic players who understood the legal system and were able to put it to use to their benefit in struggles against those challenging their positions and personal wealth.

Lilyam Padrón Reyes concentrates on a group of people that historians had long believed to have disappeared: Cuba's indigenous population. She first reflects on the reasons given for the non-inclusion of Indians in the demographic figures produced on the island during the first centuries after the conquest. Then she demonstrates how Indians reappeared in the censuses taken during the second half of the eighteenth century, as a result of the administrative and military reforms of General Alejandro O'Reilly from 1763. Through a study of the militias of the Indian towns of San Luis de los Caneyes and San Pablo de Jiguani, Padrón Reyes reveals how the Indian militia became an important pillar under a new collective identity, used by both the communities and individual members of these towns to negotiate their positions within the colonial order.

Finally, Noelle Richardson explores a different strategy of self-fashioning in the context of eighteenth-century Portuguese India via examining the use and appropriation of colonial legal institutions and mechanisms by Hindu merchants. In particular, she shows how their efforts to acquire privileges, including the right to display their wealth, made the colonial courts pivotal in social positioning and self-fashioning. Richardson makes a valuable contribution by demonstrating how these non-European merchants, who supposedly acted as independent entrepreneurs, sought to secure the favor of the state through what she describes as a carefully calculated act of "performative subjecthood" resulting in versions of a deserving self that highlight the importance of their commercial contributions to the general well-being of the colonial state.

The contributors to this volume each approach processes of self-fashioning and identity-making in their own ways. Nonetheless, what connects their contributions is their attention to the ways in which actors tell stories about themselves in dialogue with the above-outlined assessment processes as well as the legal practices, norms, laws, and theories on the origins and alterability of human difference that shaped them. Through examining the strategies by means of which various actors fashioned their notions of a deserving self both inside and outside the bureaucratic apparatus, the chapters seek to add to our knowledge about the dynamics of the distributive struggles of the Iberian empires during this period as well as the different forms of knowledge produced by them. The contributions also help us think about the ways in which the mobility of people associated with the globalization process can in varying ways influence individual and collective identities, depending on the challenges faced and opportunities generated due to their mobility. They reveal that the constructing of a sense of entitlement was a factor that strongly determined how the people studied here looked at themselves and presented their visions of the world and their ideas about their own place within it. Although conceptualizations of a deserving self varied between places and through time, the following chapters illustrate the remarkable diffusion and longevity of certain strategies of self-fashioning. This volume thus underlines the importance of considering different distributive struggles to understand how people's images of themselves have been shaped by varying experiences with and responses to globalization.

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INGRID SIMSON

Estrategias de *self-fashioning* en forma de epopeya tradicional sobre la conquista y la colonización de América: Alonso de Ercilla y Alonso Gregorio de Escobedo*

EL INDIVIDUO EN EL RENACIMIENTO

Desde que lo hiciera Jacob Burckhardt, el Renacimiento ha sido descrito como una época en la que el ser humano alcanza una nueva consciencia de sí mismo como individuo: “[...] por primera vez en Italia [...] se levanta también lo *subjetivo*; de modo que el hombre se convierte en *individuo* provisto de un espíritu y se reconoce a sí mismo como tal”.¹ La evaluación hecha por el historiador suizo en su famosa obra *La cultura del Renacimiento en Italia*, de 1860, ha sido relativizada desde entonces; algunos investigadores como Peter Burke hablan de “renacimientos” y describen la transición de la Edad Media a la Edad Moderna como un proceso paulatino que ocurrió de formas distintas a lo largo de Europa.² Sin embargo, es un hecho que durante los siglos que comprenden la Edad Media la religión y el sistema feudal casi no se enfocaron en el ser humano como individuo. Fue gracias al posterior redescubrimiento de textos antiguos, a los nuevos conocimientos científicos que hicieron posible una nueva imagen del mundo y ayudaron a cuestionar las tradiciones, y a otros

* Agradezco a Andrea Garcés Farfán sus traducciones al español.

¹ Jakob Burckhardt: *La cultura del Renacimiento en Italia*. Trad. Teresa Blanco, Fernando Bouza y Juan Barja. Madrid 2004, p. 141.

² Peter Burke critica, por ejemplo, “the dramatic contrasts which he [Burckhardt] makes between Renaissance and Middle Ages and between Italy and the rest of Europe. They [professional historians] consider these contrasts to be exaggerated, ignoring as they do the many innovations which were made in the Middle Ages; the survival of traditional attitudes into the sixteenth century, or even later”. Peter Burke: *The Renaissance*. Basingstoke 1987, p. 2. Burke habla de “various ‘renaissances’” y define la época como “a particular cluster of changes in western culture”. *Ibidem*, pp. 4-5. Es lógico que en la actualidad Burke hable de “hybrid Renaissance”. Véase Peter Burke: *Hybrid Renaissance: Culture, Language, Architecture*. Budapest 2016.

mecanismos de innovación que el individuo adquirió una posición más importante en la sociedad de la época.

Para poner fin a los rígidos esquemas de pensamiento y comportamiento de la Edad Media fue necesario transgredir varios límites. La curiosidad y el asombro se convirtieron en premisas fundamentales para el desarrollo de nuevos modos de ver y de actuar. En contraste con la Antigüedad, en la Edad Media lo nuevo carecía de importancia, pues el mundo de la época, cerrado en sí mismo, recurría únicamente a valores y concepciones tradicionales. El interés de conocimiento relacionado con lo nuevo, la curiosidad teórica, se veía “discriminada y en una restrictiva relación de subordinación frente a otro interés existencial planteado como absoluto”.³ Blumenberg habla aquí de una “configuración medieval que desprecia la curiosidad”.⁴ En una época en la que lo nuevo y la curiosidad eran mal vistos, el asombro producido en otros tiempos por la observación de lo nuevo se convierte en devoción religiosa, en un “afecto que es una expresión indirecta de la grandeza divina”.⁵ Sin embargo, para el final de la Edad Media el gusto por lo nuevo empieza a recobrar su importante rol.⁶

Francesco Petrarca parece estar en el umbral entre estas dos épocas cuando sube el Mont Ventoux, experiencia que narra en una de sus cartas.⁷ Con la mirada puesta en lo nuevo, es la curiosidad la que lo motiva hasta la cima. Observar lo terrenal produce un asombro que, como experiencia estética, es análogo a la experiencia de maravillarse ante Dios. No obstante “la devoción a Dios es incompatible con la susceptibilidad a la fascinación terrenal”.⁸ La religión triunfa cuando el autor revisa las *Confesiones* de San Agustín.

Petrarca no alcanza a lograr por completo algo que sucede en el periodo posterior: la mirada se distancia de Dios y se dirige hacia lo terrenal. La historia

³ Hans Blumenberg: *Der Prozeß der theoretischen Neugierde*. Fráncfort del Meno. 41988, p. 11. Esta y todas las siguientes traducciones del alemán son propias.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 139.

⁵ Stefan Matuschek: *Über das Staunen. Eine ideengeschichtliche Analyse*. Tubinga 1991, p. 54.

⁶ Véase José Antonio Maravall: *La estimación de lo nuevo en la cultura española (II)*. En: *Cuadernos hispanoamericanos* 171 (1964), p. 200.

⁷ Véase Francesco Petrarca: *Le Familiari* I. Ed. Vittorio Rossi. Florencia 1933, pp. 153-161. Véase también Blumenberg: *Prozeß der theoretischen Neugierde*, pp. 142-144; Matuschek: *Über das Staunen*, pp. 101-104.

⁸ Matuschek: *Über das Staunen*, p. 104.

“se convirtió en una instancia contra la metafísica”.⁹ Ahora se trata de descubrir lo nuevo sin poner límites a la curiosidad y a la voluntad de conocimiento. El asombro medieval ligado a la devoción a Dios parece superado. Esto se manifiesta de forma particular en un fragmento de Leonardo da Vinci sobre la visita de una cueva en el que la mirada se centra en un evento natural, haciendo hincapié en la ambivalencia de lo desconocido.¹⁰

Lo nuevo encierra al mismo tiempo la posibilidad del peligro y de lo maravilloso, lo cual vindica y a la vez legitima el asombro y la curiosidad teórica. Inicialmente, estos se volcaron hacia la Antigüedad, novedosa a pesar de pertenecer al pasado. Sin embargo, el gusto por lo nuevo se dirigió más adelante también a otros ámbitos, incluidos territorios lejanos, la ciencia y al arte. Lo desconocido despierta el interés de los sujetos renacentistas en un proceso que también sucede en España. Al respecto, Maravall habla de una “atracción de lo no conocido: lo raro es curioso por no visto”.¹¹

Según Gumbrecht, el paso de la Edad Media a la Edad Moderna está marcado por “la ampliación, el distanciamiento, la multiplicación de los horizontes de experiencias”, que convierten al ser humano en “instancia de interpretación” y al mundo en “objeto de la interpretación humana”.¹² La renovación de la curiosidad teórica volvió a alejar a los seres humanos de lo metafísico¹³ y los acercó a la realidad terrenal, en un proceso paulatino que se gestó sobre todo en los círculos intelectuales y humanistas.¹⁴ Fueron el asombro, la curiosidad y la observación de lo real los que permitieron las campañas de descubrimiento y

⁹ Blumenberg: *Der Prozeß der theoretischen Neugierde*, p. 141.

¹⁰ “E stato alquanto, subito sa[l]se in me due cose, paura e desiderio: paura per la minac[cian]te e scura spilonca, desiderio per vedere se là entro fusse alcu[na] miracolosa cosa”. Leonardo da Vinci: *Scritti letterari*. Ed. Augusto Marinoni. Milán ³1987, p. 185.

¹¹ Maravall: *La estimación de lo nuevo (II)*, p. 443.

¹² Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht: *Wenig Neues in der Neuen Welt. Über Typen der Erfahrungsbildung in spanischen Kolonialchroniken des XVI. Jahrhunderts*. En: Wolf-Dieter Stempel y Karlheinz Stierle (eds.): *Die Pluralität der Welten. Aspekte der Renaissance in der Romania*. Múnich 1987, pp. 227-228.

¹³ Puesto que no se renuncia por completo al principio divino, Blumenberg acierta cuando habla de la “época del Dios oculto”. Blumenberg: *Der Prozeß der theoretischen Neugierde*, p. 149.

¹⁴ Véase Burke: *Renaissance*, p. 24; Maravall: *La estimación de lo nuevo (II)*, p. 441. Véase también Agnes Heller: *Renaissance Man*. Trad. Richard E. Allen. Londres/Henley/Boston 1978, pp. 27-56.

conquista de los siglos XV y XVI. Cristóbal Colón es un buen ejemplo de un hombre que, a pesar de seguir inmerso en un pensamiento medieval, logra recorrer caminos nunca antes transitados gracias a que cimienta sus acciones en sus convicciones personales.¹⁵

El nuevo enfoque en lo terrenal estuvo asociado a un pragmatismo a la hora de actuar que vino acompañado de más necesidades económicas, el fortalecimiento del comercio y el surgimiento de la burguesía. Una obra programática al respecto es *El príncipe* de Niccolò Machiavelli, publicada póstumamente en 1532, en la que se describe el comportamiento de un príncipe que busca el mayor éxito posible, relegando a un segundo plano la observación de los principios cristianos y morales. Este pronunciado pragmatismo terrenal fue especialmente importante en el Renacimiento español. A diferencia de Italia, en España no hubo un quiebre radical con la Edad Media y el acercamiento a las formas y los textos antiguos no tuvo un lugar central.¹⁶ El tránsito de España a la Edad Moderna ocurrió sobre todo en el ámbito político. Gumbrecht afirma que “en España la Edad Moderna no surgió dentro del horizonte de la erudición humanista, sino como consecuencia de acciones racionales centradas en el sujeto” por parte de los Reyes Católicos, los primeros gobernantes modernos de Europa.¹⁷ Esta particularidad de la Edad Moderna temprana española puede ayudar a explicar el éxito de la política española de los siglos XVI y XVII.

SELF-FASHIONING: ESTRATEGIAS PARA SATISFACER LAS NECESIDADES INDIVIDUALES

El aumento del valor del individuo a inicios de la Edad Moderna llevó a que las élites adquirieran una especial consciencia de sí mismas y dio origen a una forma de representación particular, a la que Stephen Greenblatt daría el nombre de *self-fashioning*. En su obra de 1980, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning. From More to Shakespeare*, Greenblatt analiza la forma como los autores del Renaci-

¹⁵ Véase sobre todo Tzvetan Todorov: *La conquête de l'Amérique. La question de l'autre*. Paris 1982, pp. 6-55.

¹⁶ “En ningún otro lugar la evocación humanista del mundo antiguo tuvo un papel tan poco importante como en España”. Gumbrecht: *Wenig Neues in der Neuen Welt*, p. 227.

¹⁷ Gumbrecht: *Wenig Neues in der Neuen Welt*, pp. 229-230.

miento anglosajón se escenificaron a sí mismos, gracias a que tenían una identidad clara y suficiente consciencia de sí mismos.¹⁸

A principios de la Edad Moderna el ser humano se da cuenta de la plasticidad del carácter del ser humano: “[...] in the sixteenth century there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process”.¹⁹ Un ejemplo es la obra de Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus, quien incluye reflexiones pedagógicas en el núcleo de su filosofía.

Un mayor entendimiento sobre el comportamiento humano y una forma de actuar centrada en cumplir objetivos llevaron a que cada vez más personas, en diversos ámbitos y clases sociales, recurrieran a la autoescenificación y al utilitarismo para imponer deseos y propósitos individuales. Aunque Greenblatt se centra en autores del Renacimiento inglés, sus reflexiones también son válidas en el contexto español: “self-fashioning occurs at the point of encounter between an authority and an alien, that what is produced in this encounter partakes of both the authority and the alien that is marked for attack, and hence that any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss”.²⁰ Greenblatt también alude a la importancia del lenguaje en el proceso de *self-fashioning*.

Las tesis de Greenblatt parecen funcionar especialmente bien en relación con el expansionismo español. Los involucrados en la empresa expansionista estaban al servicio de una autoridad, la Monarquía Española, en cuyo nombre conquistaron y colonizaron mundos desconocidos. Se trataba de personas con una fuerte identidad, una educación que les permitía reconocer sus propias necesidades y pretensiones, y los suficientes conocimientos y consciencia de sí mismos para poder articularlas. Conquistadores, misionarios y colonos formularon sus necesidades en forma de cartas, reportes, relaciones, crónicas y otros tipos de textos, a menudo disfrazándolas de información. La intención real de estos escritores – en la mayoría de los casos pedir compensación, mejor remuneración, ascensos o reconocimiento – influyó en la forma y el contenido de los textos – en la selección temática, el idioma, y la forma de narrar y argumentar –,

¹⁸ Véase Stephen Greenblatt: *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago/Londres 1980.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

y podía llevar a narraciones deliberadamente falsas, ponderaciones desproporcionadas, distorsiones y falsificaciones. En ellos, el autor suele ponerse a sí mismo en primer plano, resalta sus acciones heroicas y presenta de forma exagerada sus privaciones. Así, por ejemplo, en sus cartas a Carlos V, Hernán Cortés se enfoca en sus logros personales para justificar sus acciones arbitrarias e ilegítimas.²¹ Otros autores engrandecían las capacidades de sus contrincantes en el combate para mostrarse más heroicos.

Si bien se han examinado y analizado las estrategias de la autoescenificación presentes en cartas y reportes de la conquista y la colonización de América,²² aún hacen falta estudios sobre un género literario tradicional: la épica. A continuación, presentaré dos epopeyas y analizaré sus estrategias de *self-fashioning* buscando responder preguntas como: ¿Cómo se representan a sí mismos los autores en la narración? ¿Qué necesidades son articuladas en los textos y cómo? ¿Cómo es presentada la relación con la autoridad? La pregunta acerca del encuentro con la alteridad resulta especialmente relevante: ¿en qué medida está la experiencia del otro vinculada a intereses individuales?

SELF-FASHIONING EN LAS EPOPEYAS SOBRE AMÉRICA

En la Edad Moderna temprana la épica era considerada la poesía más noble y prestigiosa. Aunque su auge, debido al regreso a la Antigüedad, fue mayor en Italia, la épica también fue muy popular entre los autores y el público de España, donde dominaban las temáticas religiosas e históricas. Al igual que los poemas épicos de la Antigüedad, en los que era difícil establecer la diferencia entre mito e historia, se trata de obras que se ubican de forma particular entre la historiografía y la poesía.²³

²¹ Véanse Stefan Rinke: *Conquistadoren und Azteken. Cortés und die Eroberung Mexikos*. Múnich 2019, sobre todo pp. 139-144 y pp. 270-278; Todorov: *La conquête de l'Amérique*, pp. 57-191.

²² Véanse, por ejemplo, Eva Stoll: *Konquistadoren als Historiographen. Diskurs-traditionelle und textpragmatische Aspekte in Texten von Francisco de Jerez, Diego de Trujillo, Pedro Pizarro und Alonso Borregán*. Tübinga 1997; Ingrid Simson: *Amerika in der spanischen Literatur des Siglo de Oro. Bericht, Inszenierung, Kritik*. Fráncfort del Meno. 2003, pp. 101-108.

²³ Para una discusión amplia sobre la definición de la épica y un resumen del desarrollo de la épica tradicional, véase Daniel Madelénat: *L'épopée*. Paris 1986; véase también Oscar Gerardo Ramos: *Categorías de la epopeya*. Bogotá 1988.

En tanto poesía heroica, la épica se prestó también para transmitir los eventos relacionados con las conquistas en América. Estos textos estaban influenciados por la épica italiana de la época – Ariosto y Tasso –, pero también por los clásicos de Homero, Virgilio o Lucano.²⁴ Es de suponer que las epopeyas sobre América se vieron influenciadas por las epopeyas españolas – entre ellas el *Cantar de mio Cid* – y francesas de la Edad Media. Sin embargo, algunos de sus rasgos característicos, como la historicidad, los aspectos realistas y la simpatía por el contrincante también se aparecen en los poemas épicos italianos. Asimismo, parece segura la influencia de la literatura española reciente, como el *Laberinto de Fortuna*, de Juan de Mena, así como los romances y las novelas de caballerías.

No obstante, las epopeyas españolas sobre temas americanos exhiben rasgos que las diferencian de sus modelos clásicos e italianos. Por ejemplo, relatan acontecimientos históricos que acaban de ocurrir, ignorando las poéticas que exigían una distancia de al menos un siglo – preferiblemente más – entre el suceso y la narración. Así lo dice, por ejemplo, Alonso López Pinciano: “[...] digo, pues, que la historia es admirable, y ni tan antigua que esté olvidada, ni ta[n] moderna que pueda dezir nadie ‘eso no pasó así’; y esta es otra condición que deue tener la buena épica”.²⁵ Además, los autores contaban los eventos en calidad de contemporáneos, en ocasiones incluso como testigos oculares involucrados en el acontecer histórico narrado. Al hacerlo, usaban estrategias de *self-fashioning* y eludían la distancia del narrador exigida por la epopeya tradicional.

En la actualidad se cuenta con cerca de treinta textos épicos sobre América, la mayoría de ellos escritos por autores españoles, aunque también hay textos de autores de las colonias.²⁶ Casi todas las obras versan sobre campañas militares relacionadas con la conquista de una región específica de América, siendo los enfrentamientos bélicos en Chile/Arauco, México y Perú los que se narran con

²⁴ Véase Pedro Piñero Ramírez: La épica hispanoamericana colonial. En: Luis Iñigo Madrigal (ed.): Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana: época colonial. Madrid 1982, pp. 164-168.

²⁵ Alonso López Pinciano: *Philosophía antigua poética* III. Ed. Alfredo Carballo Picazo. Madrid 1953, p. 169.

²⁶ Para una lista de las epopeyas españolas, véase Simson: *Amerika in der spanischen Literatur*, p. 431. Piñero Ramírez hace una lista de los autores hispanoamericanos, véase Piñero Ramírez: *La épica hispanoamericana colonial*, pp. 186-187.

mayor frecuencia, mientras que otras regiones como Florida, Argentina o Cuba figuran de manera aislada. Una excepción es *Elegías de varones ilustres de Indias*, de Juan Castellanos, una epopeya que cuenta con un amplio marco temporal y geográfico. A pesar de la temática común, los poemas épicos se diferencian entre sí por el contenido concreto que presentan, su punto de vista, el uso del lenguaje y la métrica, su valoración de los hechos y su función. Mientras que en algunas epopeyas se canta de forma panegírica las acciones heroicas de un conquistador (p. ej. Gabriel Lobo Lasso de la Vega en su *Mexicana*), en otras, las culturas extranjeras aparecen en primer plano²⁷ o se toma partido a favor o en contra de los españoles. Si bien la mayoría de las epopeyas españolas sobre América tematizan las batallas entre las tropas españolas y los indígenas, en *Espejo de paciencia* de Silvestre de Balboa Troya y Quesada, los enemigos son piratas franceses. Otras epopeyas, en cambio, subrayan el aspecto misionario de las conquistas, como es el caso de *La Florida*, de Alonso Gregorio de Escobedo, o *Las Cortesías*, de Juan Cortés Ossorio. *La Dragontea*, la epopeya histórico-política de Lope de Vega, se dedica a otro tema: los enfrentamientos entre Inglaterra y España en su lucha por la hegemonía en América.

La primacía de *La Araucana*, de Alonso de Ercilla, fue decisiva. La obra, de temprana aparición, ejerció una gran influencia sobre toda la literatura de ficción sobre temas americanos. El poema épico, que relata las batallas de los españoles contra los valientes araucanos en un Chile intransitable, tuvo una enorme distribución y es considerada hasta hoy la obra más conocida de la producción épica del Siglo de Oro. Los autores de la época reaccionaron inmediatamente a la publicación de *La Araucana*: hubo réplicas (p.ej. *Arauco domado*, de Pedro de Oña), una continuación de la historia (*Quarta y quinta parte de la Araucana*, de Diego de Santiestevan Osorio) y numerosas imitaciones. Incluso textos que hablan sobre otras regiones fueron influenciados por *La Araucana* de Ercilla.

Si bien algunas de estas epopeyas fueron muy exitosas en la España de la época, desde entonces no han sido casi tenidas en cuenta por parte de los

²⁷ *Octava maravilla*, la extensa epopeya de Bartolomé de Góngora de la cual lamentablemente solo se conservan fragmentos, da un buen vistazo a los usos, las costumbres y los mitos de los habitantes de México.

investigadores.²⁸ Aunque una posible explicación es la poca popularidad del género en la actualidad, con toda seguridad lo anterior también se debe a que no se trata de textos de la más alta calidad desde el punto de vista estético. Por otra parte, algunos de ellos solo están disponibles en forma de fragmentos o manuscritos.

ALONSO DE ERCILLA, *LA ARAUCANA*

La Araucana, la saga heroica de Alonso de Ercilla sobre las batallas entre los españoles y los valientes araucanos, es considerada la epopeya española más famosa y exitosa de la época. La primera parte de la obra fue publicada ya en 1569, y a esta le siguieron una segunda parte en 1578 y una tercera en 1589.

Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga fue un cortesano de la nobleza empobrecida al servicio de la corte de Felipe II que viajó a Perú en 1556 para participar en la campaña de García Hurtado de Mendoza contra los rebeldes araucanos.²⁹ Entre 1557 y 1558, Ercilla hizo parte de los difíciles pero cada vez más exitosos enfrentamientos entre los españoles y los rebeldes, y fue miembro de una expedición a la isla Chiloé en búsqueda de una entrada al estrecho de Magallanes.

La estadia de Ercilla en Chile terminaría de forma repentina y deshonrosa. Durante una pelea con otro español, ambos desenfundaron sus armas y fueron condenados a muerte por García Hurtado de Mendoza, el líder de la expedición. La condena a muerte se convirtió en varios años de prisión, seguidos por un breve desempeño militar y el posterior exilio en el Perú.³⁰ Después de un par de

²⁸ La literatura acerca de la épica española de la época se abarca fácilmente. La única monografía que ofrece una visión de conjunto sigue siendo Frank Pierce: *La poesía épica del Siglo de Oro*. Madrid 1961. Véase también Elizabeth B. Davis: *Myth and Identity in the Epic of Imperial Spain*. Columbia, Londres 2000. Acerca de las epopeyas que hablan sobre temas relacionados con América, véanse Piñero Ramírez: *La épica hispanoamericana colonial*; Simson: *Amerika in der spanischen Literatur*, pp. 136-263; Juan Bautista Avalle-Arce: *La épica colonial*. Pamplona 2000; Raúl Marrero-Fente: *Poesía épica colonial del siglo XVI: historia, teoría y práctica*. Madrid/Fránkfort al Meno 2017; Roger Friedlein: *Kosmovisionen: Inszenierungen von Wissen und Dichtung im Epos der Renaissance in Frankreich, Portugal und Spanien*. Stuttgart 2014, pp. 267-342.

²⁹ Sobre la vida y la obra de Ercilla, véanse Frank Pierce: *Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga*. Amsterdam 1984; Marcos A. Morínigo: *Introducción biográfica y crítica*. En: Marcos A. Morínigo y Isaias Lerner (eds.): *La Araucana I*. Madrid 1979, pp. 7-109; Simson: *Amerika in der spanischen Literatur*, pp. 145-146; Friedlein: *Kosmovisionen*, pp. 279-306.

³⁰ Véase Morínigo: *Introducción biográfica y crítica*, pp. 24-25.

paradas en Panamá y Colombia, Ercilla regresó a España en 1563, lugar donde escribió y publicó su epopeya.

El proceso de creación del poema épico no es completamente claro. Parece que Ercilla tomó notas durante su estancia en Chile; según Moríngo, llevaba una especie de “diario poético de la guerra contra los araucanos”.³¹ Sin embargo, se puede asumir que el texto de la epopeya como tal no fue escrito sino hasta su regreso a España. Ercilla no hace un reporte objetivo de los hechos, especialmente cuando narra episodios vividos por él mismo.

No obstante, los episodios que narran las aventuras de Ercilla solo conforman una parte de la epopeya – los cantos 16 al 36. Buena parte de la obra se ocupa de la historia de Arauco antes de la llegada de Ercilla. Para darle veracidad a la parte de la historia no experimentada por él, el poeta soldado menciona fuentes confiables, aunque sin citar pasajes concretos.³² A lo largo del texto aparecen también historias de amor protagonizadas por las indígenas Tegualda y Glaura y por la figura mitológica Dido, así como una historia fantástica sobre el mago Fitón, y digresiones históricas sobre la historia contemporánea de España: Lepanto, San Quentin y Felipe II en Portugal.

Al escribir su epopeya, Ercilla perseguía dos objetivos: vengarse de García Hurtado de Mendoza, el líder de la expedición a Chile, a quien Ercilla culpaba de su regreso deshonoroso,³³ y conseguir el favor del rey español. La faceta vengativa de la obra lleva, en términos generales, a una representación negativa de los conquistadores, los soldados y otros combatientes españoles, los cuales aparecen como cobardes, avaros, sanguinarios e ineptos:

“A Valdivia mirad, de pobre infante
 si era poco el estado que tenía
 cincuenta mil vasallos que delante
 le ofrecen doce marcos de oro al día;
 esto y aun mucho más no era bastante
 y así la hambre lo detenía.
 Codicia fue ocasión de tanta guerra
 y perdición total de aquesta tierra

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 42.

³² Véase, por ejemplo, Ercilla: *La Araucana* I, p. 373.

³³ Sobre la venganza de Ercilla contra García Hurtado de Mendoza y sus repercusiones, véase sobre todo Simson: *Amerika in der spanischen Literatur*, pp. 189-192.

[...]

La poca edad y menos experiencia
de los mozos livianos que allí había
descubrió con la usada inadvertencia
a tal siempre su necia valentía”.³⁴

A esta representación de los españoles se oponen la exaltación e idealización de los guerreros araucanos, especialmente del cacique Caupolicán, el cual aparece desde el principio como el héroe y combatiente ideal:

“Era este noble mozo de alto hecho
varón de autoridad, grave y severo,
amigo de guardar todo derecho,
áspero y riguroso, justiciero;
de cuerpo grande y relevado pecho,
hábil, diestro, fortísimo y ligero,
sabio, astuto, sagaz, determinado”.³⁵

El clímax de la narración es la ejecución de Caupolicán. En ella se demuestran la concepción del honor y la intrepidez de Caupolicán, quien aguanta horribles torturas impasible y sin lamentarse.³⁶

Esta constelación lleva a una situación paradójica en la que Ercilla presenta de forma negativa a los ganadores de la historia y exalta a los verdaderos perdedores. En la representación del campamento araucano se puede ver la influencia de la *Farsalia* de Lucano, en la que un pueblo lucha contra un tirano por la libertad. No obstante, Ercilla no llega al punto de cuestionar la legitimidad de la guerra de los españoles contra los araucanos. A pesar de su crítica contra los conquistadores y los soldados presentes en Chile, según Ercilla la Monarquía Española tiene razón al defender la universalidad del cristianismo y lleva a cabo una guerra justa contra los rebeldes araucanos. Sin embargo, la representación predominantemente realista y crítica del lado español contrasta con la representación altamente ficcional e idealizada de Arauco, haciendo que el texto parezca ambivalente: “Ercilla’s ideological commitment is distinct from his moral

³⁴ Ercilla: *La Araucana* I, pp. 174-177.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 160.

³⁶ Véase Ercilla: *Araucana* II, p. 355.

imperative. That is the reason the poem presents no single monolithic heroic role. Ercilla's duality of sentiment breeds a divided epic vision and, ultimately, a divided heroic image".³⁷

El único español representado de forma positiva en *La Araucana* es Ercilla, el yo narrador. Las batallas en las que participó son descritas minuciosamente, mientras que las demás apenas se mencionan, así hayan sido esenciales en el conflicto. "Ercilla himself appears in the pages of *La Araucana* as perhaps the most perfect example of the ideal soldier. In his actions he is always noble, generous, compassionate, a defender of helpless women and magnanimous towards the defeated foe".³⁸ Así, por ejemplo, en el canto 28, Glaura le debe al autor-narrador el reencuentro con su amado; en el canto 21, Ercilla ayuda a Tegualda a salvar el cuerpo de su marido Crepino, caído en combate; y tras la batalla de Millarapué, en el canto 26, el autor-narrador intenta en vano salvarle la vida a Galvarino en contra de la voluntad de otro español.

Para representarse de esta manera, Ercilla exagera sin reparos. Un ejemplo de la forma como Ercilla se sobreestima a sí mismo es cuando asume que habría podido impedir la ejecución de Caupolicán de haber estado presente: "al cual, Señor, no estuve presente/ [...] que si yo a la sazón allí estuviera/ la cruda ejecución se supendiera".³⁹ ¿Qué hubiera podido hacer un simple soldado como Ercilla contra la decisión de sus superiores? Igualmente, al narrar la expedición a la isla Chiloé el narrador se enfoca solo en él mismo, la única persona capaz de llegar lejos. Al llegar, graba en un árbol: "Aquí llegó, donde otro no ha llegado/ don Alonso de Ercilla".⁴⁰ En general, llama la atención cómo el personaje de Ercilla se vuelve cada vez más novelado, al punto de enfrentarse a seres fantásticos y mitológicos como hacen los héroes de las novelas de caballería, lo cual le permite al autor engrandecerse y sobresalir.

El objetivo de la representación que hace Ercilla de sí mismo era convencer al rey de su excelencia. Con ello, esperaba recuperar el favor del rey después de su deshonor y obtener cargos o beneficios financieros: "No hay duda de que *La*

³⁷ William Melzer: Ercilla's Divided Heroic Vision: A Re-Evaluation of the Epic Hero in 'La Araucana'. En: *Hispania* 56 (1973), p. 220.

³⁸ August J. Aquila: Ercilla's Concept of the Ideal Soldier. En: *Hispania* 60, no. 1 (1977), p. 74.

³⁹ Ercilla: *Araucana* II, pp. 355-356.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 385.

Araucana fue concebida en primer término [...] como una especie de diario poético de la guerra contra los araucanos, en la que [...] las andanzas del autor prevalecen sobre la guerra misma; como una suerte de probanza de méritos, para llamar la atención del rey sobre sus servicios y obtener recompensas en forma de cargos o empleos en la corte”.⁴¹ El aspecto panegírico de *La Araucana* está entonces en un primer plano. La epopeya no solo está dedicada a Felipe II, sino que el rey es interpelado directamente en varios momentos. Adicionalmente, Ercilla se refiere a los momentos estelares de la expansión del poder español durante el reinado de Felipe II. Su texto integra relatos de las batallas de San Quentin y Lepanto, y canta la anexión de Portugal por parte del rey español, enfocándose sobre todo en el comportamiento prudente e inteligente del soberano:

“Como Felipe en la ocasión presente,
que de precisa obligación forzado,
en favor de las leyes justamente
las permitidas armas ha tomado;
no fundando el derecho en ser potente
ni de codicia de reinar llevado,
pues se estiende su cetro y monarquía
hasta donde remata el sol su vía”.⁴²

Si bien la *Araucana* fue muy exitosa entre el público, Ercilla no logró obtener ni favor del rey ni un puesto en la corte. Solo en una ocasión, en 1578, Felipe II le encomendó una misión que no logró llevar a cabo de forma satisfactoria.⁴³ Al final de la tercera parte de *La Araucana*, el autor se lamenta desesperanzado por su fracaso:

“Y aunque la voluntad, nunca cansada,
está para serviros hoy más viva,
desmaya la esperanza quebrantada
viéndome proejar siempre agua arriba;
y al cabo de tan larga y gran jornada

⁴¹ Morínigo: Introducción biográfica y crítica, p. 42.

⁴² Ercilla: *Araucana II*, p. 394.

⁴³ Véase Morínigo: Introducción biográfica y crítica, p. 13.

hallo que mi cansado barco arriba
de la adversa fortuna contrastado
lejos del fin y puerto deseado”.⁴⁴

No obstante, Ercilla logró perjudicar la reputación de García Hurtado de Mendoza de forma duradera. En las décadas posteriores a la publicación de *La Araucana*, el conquistador y su familia invirtieron mucho dinero encargando epopeyas y obras teatrales para mejorar la imagen pública del conquistador y presentarlo como un héroe radiante y combativo.⁴⁵

ALONSO GREGORIO DE ESCOBEDO, *LA FLORIDA*

Alonso Gregorio de Escobedo era un monje franciscano que llegó a Florida como misionero, experiencia que refiere en una epopeya de gran longitud que no fue publicada sino hasta 2015.⁴⁶ La única información que se tiene del autor es la que se puede extraer de la epopeya. Puesto que la obra tiene un carácter claramente autobiográfico, la escasa información que esta proporciona sobre la vida del autor puede tomarse por cierta.⁴⁷ Según *La Florida*, el monje franciscano, probablemente proveniente de Moguer, Andalucía, va a América bajo el mando del monje Alonso de Reinoso. Durante la travesía, Escobedo es capturado por piratas ingleses. Posteriormente, el monje llega a La Habana, pasando primero por Yaguana, en el Caribe, y por las ciudades cubanas de Baracoa y Bayamo. De ahí parte a Florida junto a otros misioneros, y llega a su destino en 1587, donde le es adjudicada la misión “Nombre de Dios”. No es claro cuánto

⁴⁴ Ercilla: *La Araucana* II, p. 409.

⁴⁵ Véase Simson: *Amerika in der spanischen Literatur*, pp. 388-391.

⁴⁶ La primera edición completa del texto fue editada por Alexandra E. Sununu y publicada en 2015 con el título *La Florida. Estudio y edición anotada*. En 1963 James W. Covington había publicado una traducción al inglés, escrita en prosa, de algunos pasajes de la epopeya. Este estudio está basado en el manuscrito Ms. 187 de la Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid.

⁴⁷ Sobre la vida y la obra de Escobedo, véanse Charles W. Arnade: Foreword. Fray Escobedo O. F. M. and His Epic Poem ‘La Florida’. En: James W. Covington (ed.): *Pirates, Indians and Spaniards. Father Escobedo’s ‘La Florida’*. San Petersburgo, Fla. 1963, pp. V-X; Fidel de Lejarza: Rasgos autobiográficos del padre Escobedo en su poema ‘La Florida’. En: *Revista de Indias* 1, no. 2 (1940), pp. 35-69; Gregory Joseph Keegan y Leandro Tormo Sanz: *Experiencia misionera en la Florida (siglos XVI y XVII)*. Madrid 1957, sobre todo pp. 269-280; Simson: *Amerika in der spanischen Literatur*, pp. 148-152.

tiempo permaneció Escobedo en la Florida, pero se puede asumir que abandonó el territorio y regresó a España antes de la primera rebelión de los Guale en 1597.

El texto, cuyo título completo es *La Florida. Primera, segunda y tercera partes de la Florida. Donde se canta uida, muerte y milagros del glorioso S. Diego de S. Niculas del Puerto frayle menor. Y el martirio de quatro religiosos. Y con los hechos de muchos Españoles y con los ritos y costumbres y conversion de los Indios. Y con la muerte de un Françes y su gente. Dedicadas a don Manuel de Guzman y de Mendoça Conde de Niebla y heredero del ducado de Medina Çidonia*,⁴⁸ está compuesto por tres partes, a su vez divididas en cantos sin numeración, y constituye un manuscrito de cuatrocientos cincuenta folios, incluidas algunas hojas en blanco. Al inicio de la primera parte se cuenta, en diez cantos, la historia de San Diego de Alcalá, la cual había sido leída por el autor a otros monjes mientras esperaban en un monasterio andaluz a que su barco zarpara. El resto de la primera parte de la epopeya está dedicado a la historia de trece misioneros que fueron a Florida en 1595 y fueron asesinados durante la primera rebelión de los Guale.

No es sino hasta la segunda parte que Escobedo comienza a narrar los acontecimientos vividos por él mismo, entre ellos el asalto a su barco y sus estadias en las islas del Caribe. Al hacerlo, describe a los habitantes de los lugares visitados, sus costumbres alimentarias, sus tradiciones y prácticas religiosas. A esta parte pertenecen tanto la historia de un español que vivió diecisiete años con indígenas en Florida, como las maquinaciones de Francis Drake y otros piratas ingleses.⁴⁹

La tercera parte narra el viaje de Escobedo desde La Habana hasta Florida. El lector recibe abundante información sobre los indígenas de este último lugar, sus usos y costumbres, su arte militar, sus creencias y su evangelización. En dos de los cantos se habla sobre piratas franceses y sus batallas con los españoles. El final está compuesto por varios sermones pronunciados por el autor-misionero tanto a indígenas como a creyentes españoles.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Alonso Gregorio de Escobedo: *La Florida*. Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Ms. 187.

⁴⁹ Lejarza describe minuciosamente esta parte de la epopeya en Lejarza: *Rasgos autobiográficos*, pp. 39-40.

⁵⁰ Para el contenido de esta tercera parte, véase *Ibidem*, p. 40.

El autor utiliza un lenguaje resueltamente sencillo y un estilo realista. Además de la Biblia y algunos textos teológicos no es posible reconocer en el texto otras referencias literarias. Llama la atención la frágil estructura del texto, el cual está lleno de digresiones que le otorgan un carácter fragmentario. A pesar de su título, la narración sobre Florida no empieza sino hasta el folio 307. Los acontecimientos de la rebelión de los Gualé narrados por Escobedo en la primera parte en realidad corresponden al final desde el punto de vista cronológico. Por esto, Riis Owre asume que los dos cantos que se centran en este tema terminaron en la primera parte por error.⁵¹

El elemento cohesivo entre los cantos y las partes es el personaje del narrador, quien parece ser idéntico al autor. Aunque se mantiene en un segundo plano en la trama, es *su* perspectiva la que domina la narración, son *sus* vivencias las que determinan el texto. Los asaltos piratas, las observaciones sobre las ciudades coloniales de América, la actividad misionera, la rebelión indígena y, sobre todo, las descripciones, valoraciones y las opiniones religiosas están estrechamente ligados a Escobedo. Si bien el autor hace saber que está presentando las experiencias de otras personas, no revela la identidad de sus informantes.

La fuerte correspondencia entre autor y narrador surge del estilo realista del texto que en general evita la ficción y lo fantástico. El gran número de digresiones religiosas y los sermones de Escobedo remiten a la educación previa y a los intereses del monje franciscano. Aunque el lenguaje es sencillo y la estructura no está bien lograda, la composición de la narración en octavas reales indica que el autor debió haber recibido una mejor educación que un monje promedio de su tiempo.

En esta narración épica de corte autobiográfico, Escobedo se presenta como un monje franciscano creyente y un misionero tradicional que se aproxima a América y a sus habitantes con interés etnográfico. Describe de forma realista la flora, la fauna y los seres humanos que encuentra en su camino, así como sus costumbres y hábitos. Si bien en su texto no aparece el concepto del bárbaro, los indígenas de Florida son descritos como supremamente incivilizados y salvajes, lo cual se nota ya en su apariencia:

⁵¹ Véase J. Riis Owre: Alonso de Escobedo and 'La Florida'. En: Hispania 47, no. 1 (1964), pp. 242-250.

“Una raya a su cara negra baña
Que con su propio sangre fue teñida
Que sube de la barba hasta la frente
Para ser conocido por valiente
[...]
aunque visten de arrogancia
Que no puede el vestido miserable
Sufrirse por su olor ser detestable”.⁵²

Lo anterior es seguido de consideraciones sobre la alimentación de los indígenas, quienes viven principalmente del maíz, la caza y la pesca. Como peculiaridad de la cocina, por lo demás narrada de forma bastante frugal, se menciona una bebida, la cacina, tomada en ocasiones sociales durante una ceremonia sencilla.

El autor revela poco sobre la vida en comunidad de los indígenas. Menciona caciques, personas influyentes y algunas de rango inferior. Todos viven en pequeños bohíos. En algunos puntos el monje franciscano se expresa acerca de la generosidad de la población indígena, que le permite al rico compartir sus pertenencias con el pobre. Así, por ejemplo, la pesca es repartida entre los desposeídos y el cacique provee maíz a los pobres.⁵³ El comportamiento de los indígenas respecto a los misioneros españoles es descrito en ocasiones de forma extremadamente violenta:

“Y otros con gruesas piedras molestaron
Al martyr de la orden Franciscana
Con macanas y palos lo mataron
Con término ynsolente y furia ynsana
Quitándole la piel de la cabeza
Con mucha agilidad y sutileza”.⁵⁴

No obstante, la atención del monje franciscano está centrada principalmente en la vida religiosa de los nativos y su labor como misionero: “canto/ Verdades del

⁵² Escobedo: La Florida, ff. 328r-329r.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, ff. 331r-338r.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 156r.

ynfiel Indio ygnorante./ Dirélas sin torcer un solo paso [...]”.⁵⁵ Al igual que la mayoría de los españoles, Escobedo está convencido de que América es el reino de Satán. El paganismo de los indígenas se vuelve para el misionero el criterio al que se somete toda la percepción y el juicio de los indígenas:

“Los Dioses que los Indios adoravan
Y supe de los uiejos por certeza
Que al Demonio enuidioso respetavan
[...]
Mas los Indios de agora están contritos
Y guardan la doctrina refulgente
De la yglesia de Dios con gran respecto
Tiniéndola en el alma por objecto”.⁵⁶

Cualquier comportamiento de los indígenas es explicado mediante su infidelidad. Estos prejuicios determinan la percepción de alteridad por parte de Escobedo. Aunque el misionero elogia de vez en cuando las habilidades de los indígenas, cuando lo hace se retracta inmediatamente aludiendo a su infidelidad:

“Si como tienen obras fee tuvieran
Fueran de los llamados y escogidos
Mas porque en el Demonio vil esperan
Serán con fuego eterno consumidos”.⁵⁷

La fe cristiana es la única medida usada para juzgar y describir al otro. Escobedo no está en capacidad de adaptar sus prejuicios a las circunstancias, lo cual lo priva de una experiencia de alteridad más profunda, como la experimentada por otros monjes e incluso otros soldados y colonos que trataron de cerca con comunidades indígenas. No obstante, el juicio acerca de la fe verdadera también es dominante en las descripciones de otras personas. Así, por ejemplo, en la segunda parte de *La Florida*, el autor-narrador describe las acciones del pirata inglés Francis Drake, el cual es descrito como un combatiente y estratega hábil y

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 209v.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, f. 208r.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 337r.

valiente. Sin embargo, el rol de Drake como alguien que desierta de la fe verdadera y pacta con el diablo es decisivo:

“De quien [Dios] manifestó ser enemigo,
Verdugo de su yglesia sacrosanta,
Solo tiene al Demonio por amigo
Cuyos costumbres a su alma planta.
Daranle fuego eterno por castigo
(que solo ymaginar en el espanta)
En el ynfierno horrible y tenébroso
Donde siempre carezca de reposo”.⁵⁸

Aunque Escobedo también menciona algunos acontecimientos históricos, como el proceder de Menéndez de Avilés contra Ribault y los colonos franceses en Florida o las actividades de los piratas en el Caribe, su texto se centra en la vida cotidiana de la misión. Describe lo difícil que es el trato con los infieles, sus supersticiones y el proceso de conversión, el cual siempre transcurre rápidamente. El monje enseña a ser un misionero efectivo; su historia, junto con los ocho sermones de la tercera parte de la epopeya y el relato sobre San Diego de Alcalá en la primera parte, le otorgan a su obra un componente didáctico y un carácter de manual de instrucciones.

La información es la preocupación principal de Escobedo a la hora de narrar. Su escritura es seria y se rige por el acontecer real. El mismo autor subraya el contenido de verdad de su relato:

“El caso que diré [...] Es, sin ninguna duda verdadero, El qual con los demas fueron sacados Del propio original que nunca engaña Con la vista que siempre me acompaña”.⁵⁹

Se puede asumir que el objetivo de Escobedo era informar a otros misioneros. Su obra les proveía el trasfondo necesario acerca de los territorios que visitarían, los alertaba sobre los peligros de los piratas y funcionaba como una iniciación

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, f. 264r.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 278r.

en asuntos relacionados con el trabajo de misioneros, con sermones modelo incluidos. Si bien la obra fue escrita desde la perspectiva individual y predominantemente religiosa del autor, sus contenidos son verosímiles y parecen seguir, en su mayoría, la realidad histórica. Muchas observaciones pueden ser constatadas en otros relatos historiográficos,⁶⁰ otras son nuevas. El carácter desestructurado del material, su aspecto autobiográfico y la ausencia de pasajes que el lector pueda reconocer como ficción acercan el texto a los textos historiográficos sobre la conquista de América, como las historias y las relaciones. Aunque el valor historiográfico del texto no sea muy alto, este se diferencia de las historias y las relaciones de la época sobre todo por el tipo de verso. La pregunta es qué llevó al autor a redactar sus experiencias y otros eventos en octavas reales.

La epopeya de Escobedo está dedicada a Manuel de Guzmán y de Mendoza, Conde de Niebla y heredero del Ducado de Medina Sidonia. Aunque no se conoce el trasfondo de esta dedicatoria y no se sabe nada acerca de la relación entre Escobedo y la persona a la que está dedicado el texto, se puede suponer que se trata de un protector de la orden a la que pertenecía Escobedo. Por esto se puede asumir que Escobedo eligió el exigente verso épico para conferir a su relato y a sí mismo un toque de educación y capacidad literaria, para impresionar a su protector o incluso pedir recursos y compensación para él o su orden.

CONSIDERACIONES FINALES

Aunque las dos epopeyas y los dos autores presentados son sumamente diferentes, tienen algo en común. Tanto Ercilla como Escobedo decidieron redactar sus relatos en verso y en forma de epopeya. Puesto que ambos autores tratan temas que hubieran podido abordarse en forma de prosa, la pregunta que surge es por qué tomaron esa decisión.

Ercilla se decide por la épica por ser la forma más noble de poesía y porque esperaba llamar la atención del rey y congraciarse con él. No obstante, el autor no se limita a escribir un informe en verso, sino que tanto la forma como el contenido de su obra son fieles a la tradición épica. Sin embargo, su estilización y su exaltación de sí mismo como caballero y héroe de ficción contradicen esta

⁶⁰ Véase Riis Owre: Alonso de Escobedo and 'La Florida', p. 243.

tradición. Su estrategia y la forma cómo se presenta a sí mismo dividen la autoridad en dos: por un lado, el rey español, cuyo favor busca; y por el otro, sus superiores inmediatos: el conquistador García Hurtado de Mendoza y su comitiva. Para vengarse y debilitar la autoridad de este último, Ercilla exalta a la alteridad, a los araucanos. En esta constelación errática y ambivalente, el autor se presenta a sí mismo como el único buen guerrero español, aumentando aún más la ambivalencia de la obra. El hecho de que Ercilla no haya logrado alcanzar los objetivos que se proponía es acorde con la advertencia de Greenblatt, quien afirma que es posible salir derrotado cuando uno se posiciona entre la autoridad y la alteridad.

Es más difícil sacar conclusiones sobre el texto de Escobedo. La obra de corte realista y llena de información sobre los indígenas de Florida y los habitantes de algunas islas del caribe podría estar fácilmente escrita en prosa, especialmente si se tiene en cuenta su probable aplicación como manual para misioneros. Puesto que sabemos muy poco de Escobedo y su contexto, cualquier reflexión respecto a los motivos que lo llevaron a escribir su texto en verso no es más que especulación. No obstante, la forma épica debe ser considerada como una posible estrategia del autor para darle a su texto una forma más prestigiosa y una pincelada literaria, al mismo tiempo que da cuenta del elevado nivel educativo de su autor. Gracias a su forma, el texto sobresale entre la masa de textos en prosa y llama más la atención. La forma literaria tiene sentido sobre todo si Escobedo quería, en efecto, ganar el favor del noble al que dedicó su trabajo, pues, a diferencia de Ercilla, este se presenta como un misionero obediente y conforme con el sistema, para el cual no hay nada más importante que la evangelización en la fe verdadera. Escobedo reconoce sin reparos la autoridad de la iglesia católica española y se aproxima con severidad al otro. Su conformismo es remunerado y no hay ningún fracaso a la vista, pero tampoco ningún tipo de ganancia en términos de experiencia de alteridad como la de otros monjes y soldados que vivieron en comunidad con los indígenas.

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NIKOLAUS BÖTTCHER

***Self-fashioning* y autobiografía: Conversos ante la Inquisición en las Américas en el siglo XVII**

Mientras que los judíos en el resto de Europa central habían experimentado restricciones y persecuciones desde la Edad Media, la *convivencia* de las tres religiones monoteístas existentes en la Península Ibérica, aunque idealizada por Américo Castro, se mantuvo hasta finales del siglo XIV. La identidad peculiar del sefardí se forjó debido a la Reconquista que condicionó una vida entre las culturas cristiana e islámica coexistiendo en un estado entre la paz, la guerra y, para la mayor parte del tiempo, algo en el medio. La situación de los judíos empeoró al paso que avanzaba la Reconquista. Como consecuencia de tensiones sociales las *aljamas* se convirtieron en guetos cuestionando cada vez más la *convivencia*, y a partir de 1391 surgieron las primeras acciones antijudías de parte de la plebe. Por este motivo muchos judíos se convirtieron al cristianismo. Sin embargo, estos “cristianos nuevos” caían bajo sospecha colectiva de ser conversos por conveniencia sin abrazar la religión católica. Con los primeros estatutos de la limpieza de sangre se intentó excluir a los supuestos “cripto-judíos” de las esferas del poder político y administrativo. Esta exclusión se debía en gran parte a la hostilidad del pueblo hacia los conversos como resultado social de la guerra civil entre Castilla y Aragón. Este proceso culminó en el edicto de expulsión de los judíos de los reinos de Castilla y Aragón por los Reyes Católicos en 1492 para evitar el contacto directo entre cristianos nuevos y judíos.¹ Con este acontecimiento comenzó la diáspora sefardí que se caracteriza por la migración de los judíos españoles por Europa a partir de 1492 y la migración de los conversos portugueses después de 1580 con la unión de las coronas de España y Portugal, a través del Atlántico y del Pacífico.

¹ Luis Suárez Fernández: La expulsión de los judíos. Un problema europeo. Barcelona 2012; Ludwig Vones: Die Vertreibung der spanischen Juden 1492. Politische, religiöse und soziale Hintergründe. En: Hans Hermann (ed.): 1492-1992. 500 Jahre Vertreibung der Juden Spaniens. Aquisgrán 1992, pp. 13-64.

En este artículo se combina el estudio sobre la cultura sefardí con un acercamiento metodológico que se basa en los escritos autobiográficos. La historia global y muy particularmente la investigación actual de biografías se centran en procesos de interacción, entrelazamiento, circulación y transgresión. En el contexto de una historiografía transnacional los autodocumentos ganan una nueva relevancia al informar sobre la movilidad y el *self-fashioning* (autorepresentación) de los actores. Los autodocumentos procedentes de los archivos inquisitoriales dan amplia información sobre la identidad judía y la movilidad extraordinaria de los conversos en la época moderna. En este sentido, los testimonios de los procesos se interpretan como fuente para analizar la construcción del yo. Se presentan casos de algunas personas, en su totalidad portugueses y presos por el Santo Oficio durante la época de la Unión ibérica, periodo histórico en el que Portugal estuvo bajo la Casa de Austria (1580–1640). Al final del artículo se esboza una tipología colectiva del converso “portugués” con base en las informaciones biográficas.

LAS FUENTES

Hay que preguntar hasta qué punto sirve la documentación inquisitorial como fuente para la investigación del Yo. En el curso de un pleito, tanto los acusados como los testigos tenían que pronunciar un discurso de vida. En la ciencia literaria los testimonios procedentes de estos procesos no son considerados autodocumentos debido al contexto forzoso del pleito,² mientras que el manejo de la historia de tales documentos es diferente.³ Los historiadores no trabajamos sobre la fuente sino con la fuente como producto con una propia historia que además sirve para analizar una realidad que está por encima del texto. Amelang afirma el valor del discurso de vida como fuente histórica y lo cualifica como un “acto de habla autobiográfico” (“autobiographical speech act”).⁴ Los protocolos

² Benigna von Krusenstjern: Was sind Selbstzeugnisse? Begriffskritische und quellenkundliche Überlegungen anhand von Beispielen aus dem 17. Jahrhundert. En: *Historische Anthropologie* 2 (1994), pp. 462-471.

³ Ulrich Mücke: Introducción. Escritura autobiográfica e historia en Hispanoamérica. En: *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 47. Colonia 2010, p. 4.

⁴ James Amelang: *Tracing Lives: The Spanish Inquisition and the Act of Autobiography*. En: Arianne Baggerman, Rudolf Dekker y Michael Mascuch (eds.): *Controlling Time and*

de la inquisición son transcripciones simultáneas en las que los interrogados declaran espontáneamente a las preguntas de la institución estatal. De este modo, y al contrario de las relaciones de méritos, los actores no se expresan con libertad, más bien entregan su autoridad al estado. Hay que tener en cuenta que la situación intimidatoria del interrogatorio también podía producir un alto nivel de obediencia. En previos estudios se ha podido comprobar que concordaban las informaciones de muchas personas involucradas, por ejemplo durante la ola de persecuciones que tuvieron lugar en Cartagena de Indias en 1636.⁵ Además, los tribunales entrelazados complementaban permanentemente sus datos y comparaban las informaciones para comprobar su verosimilitud.

Al igual que en la historia oral, la importancia de estos testimonios orales no está ni exclusiva ni necesariamente en la autenticidad de los hechos contados, sino en la intención del narrador. No cabe duda que la situación del interrogatorio bajo la amenaza de la tortura anule el *pacto autobiográfico* con el lector. Sin embargo, aunque no haya libertad de la expresión, es posible obtener informaciones sobre el origen de las personas en cuestión, su educación, su migración, sus experiencias y finalmente, las motivaciones para su actuación. Es decir, que estos testimonios sirven como base para una interpretación a nivel microhistórico. Por ejemplo, en los protocolos aparecen detalladas descripciones de los conversos sobre sus viajes por España y Portugal, Francia, Italia y Holanda, así como a Turquía y a las Américas. Además, se describen redes sociales y comerciales entre los centros sefarditas de la época. En nuestro contexto interesan sobre todo episodios biográficos que los reos y testigos relatan en sus testimonios. Un proceso inquisitorial consiste en gran parte de las declaraciones de reos y testigos. Tanto el discurso del reo como las testificaciones de otras personas, por norma están basadas en encuentros y conversaciones personales, lo cual permite la reconstrucción de la autobiografía con base en informaciones fragmentadas.

Shaping the Self. Developments in Autobiographical Writing since the Sixteenth Century. Leiden/Boston 2011, p. 36.

⁵ Nikolaus Böttcher: *Aufstieg und Untergang eines atlantischen Handelsimperiums: Portugiesische Kaufleute und Sklavenhändler und die Inquisition in Cartagena de Indias, 1580–1640*. Fráncfort del Meno/Madrid 1995, p. 14.

LA INQUISICIÓN EN LAS AMÉRICAS

La gran mayoría de los judíos que fueron expulsados en el año 1492 emigró a Portugal, probablemente con la esperanza de regresar pronto a su país de origen. Sin embargo, se dictó la expulsión también de Portugal cinco años después. De este modo, durante las siguientes décadas crecieron considerablemente las comunidades sefarditas en Francia, Italia, el Imperio Otomano y en los Países Bajos. Mientras tanto, la Inquisición se concentraba cada vez más en la persecución de los conversos.

En la época de los Reyes Católicos la ortodoxia religiosa se convirtió cada vez más en un pilar central de la estructura social. Por lo tanto, el control de la vida de los súbditos tenía que ser administrado por el estado. Por este motivo, en 1483 fue establecido el Consejo de la Suprema y General Inquisición. El Santo Oficio fue un instrumento ideológico cuya eficacia política sirvió para asentar los principios autoritarios que se configuran en la formación del Estado Moderno.⁶ De ahí que la Inquisición fue organizada como consejo, es decir como institución del estado que no sólo supervisaba la vida religiosa sino servía a la corona como instrumento político. A pocos años de la expulsión de los judíos de España, el Santo Oficio se había convertido en una institución política de suprema importancia. Sus tareas en cuanto al control de la vida religiosa de los súbditos de la corona crecieron, a la par que aumentó su autoridad y competencia.

En esta sociedad confesional cualquier delito contra la fe se consideraba un delito contra la comunidad entera.⁷ Los conversos llegaron en el foco de la Inquisición porque eran considerados no sólo herejes sino una amenaza para el orden público. Los procesos contra la herejía y la acumulación de informaciones genealógicas aumentaron cada vez más el poder de control por parte del Santo Oficio. Su banco de datos acerca de los súbditos de la corona convirtió a esta institución en un premoderno “servicio secreto” del estado.⁸ La Península

⁶ Jaime Contreras: *El Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en Galicia, 1560-1700: Poder, sociedad y cultura*. Madrid 1982, p. 12.

⁷ “[...] la herejía deviene en figura delictiva acumulando en sí una doble transgresión: violación de la ley de Dios y violación de la ley social, espejo y reflejo de la primera”. En: Contreras: *Inquisición en Galicia*, p. 12.

⁸ Jaime Contreras y Gustav Henningsen: *Forty-Four Thousand Cases of the Spanish Inquisition (1540–1700): Analysis of a Historical Data Bank*. En: Gustav Henningsen, John

Ibérica dispuso en pocas décadas de una red de tribunales que vigilaba la ortodoxia de la población.

En las Indias el control de la ortodoxia al principio estaba bajo competencia de los obispos. El poder de tal instrumento se reflejaba en la red de tribunales establecidos por toda la Península. El último Tribunal en España se fundó en 1569. Sólo dos años más tarde empezaron a funcionar los tribunales de Lima y México y, finalmente en 1610 en Cartagena de Indias como el puerto más importante de la flota de Tierra Firme en camino a Panamá y como punto de llegada para los esclavos africanos. La primera fase de la actividad inquisitorial americana quedó marcada por la fundación de los tribunales del Santo Oficio en las Indias y la anexión de Portugal, ya que los conversos sospechosos de ser “judaizantes” se convirtieron en el principal objetivo de la Inquisición. A mediados del siglo XVI la Inquisición española registraba cada vez menos casos de judaísmo, mientras que en Portugal llegaba a un nuevo auge. Parece ser que los judíos convertidos al cristianismo en Portugal no habían abjurado de su antigua fe. Así al menos lo vio la Inquisición que en su correspondencia usaba el término de “portugués” como sinónimo de “criptojudío”, otro término del lenguaje inquisitorial. Con la unión entre Portugal y España el problema alcanzó una nueva dimensión ya que muchos de estos portugueses de origen sefardita, en su gran mayoría comerciantes, mercaderes y vendedores, pasaron la frontera para afincarse en los centros comerciales de Castilla, Aragón y las posesiones ultramarinas.

Como consecuencia, en 1596 Felipe II declaró “por Extranjeros de los Reynos de las Indias, y de sus Costas, Puertos, é Islas adiacentes para no poder estar, ni residir en ellas á los que no fueren naturales de estos nuestros Reynos de Castilla, Leon, Aragon, Valencia, Cataluña, y Navarra, y los de las Islas de Mallorca, y Menorca, por ser de la Corona de Aragon”.⁹ Debido a la creciente migración portuguesa a las Indias, en 1614 su sucesor, Felipe III, declaró también explícitamente “por Extranjeros á los Portugueses”.¹⁰ Los cristianos nuevos caían bajo la ley de 1522 que decía que “ninguno nuevamente convertido a Nuestra Santa Fe Católica de Moro, o Judío, ni sus hijos puedan pasar a las

Tedeschi y Charles Amiel (eds.): *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe*, Dekalb, Ill. 1982, pp. 100-129.

⁹ Recopilación de Leyes, lib. IX, título XXVII, ley XXVIII.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

Indias sin expresa licencia nuestra”.¹¹ Sin embargo, la legislación colonial no pudo impedir la masiva emigración de estos extranjeros a ultramar. Con su aparición en el Nuevo Mundo los *portugueses* fueron considerados como una amenaza para la misión de la población indígena.¹² La actividad inquisitorial aumentó considerablemente. Hasta entonces la falta de tribunales del Santo Oficio había creado un espacio para minorías como los cristianos nuevos.

Pese a su importancia económica, los conversos se convertían en el objetivo principal de la exclusión y fueron perseguidos por los tribunales de Lima, México y Cartagena de Indias. El judaísmo era uno de los delitos más corrientes durante el siglo XVII. Este hecho queda comprobado también por cierta coyuntura visible en las actas referentes a solicitudes de cargos inquisitoriales en México. Salta a la vista que con la fundación del Tribunal de Nueva España, y sobre todo inmediatamente después de la unión con Portugal, creció notablemente el número de los procedimientos acerca de la limpieza de sangre.

Esto se debe a que la limpieza de sangre no fue sólo un instrumento de la discriminación racial y social. Más allá de eso, se nos presenta como un *kosmos* que se basa en un orden simplificador consistiendo de las antípodas bien y mal. La pertenencia a este sistema depende exclusiva y definitivamente de la sangre, y decide sobre el estatus social (acceso a los cargos públicos y honoríficos) y el valor moral (*virtudes*) del individuo. El total de la población no sólo se vio obligada a aceptar esta visión, sino que la hacía suya al darse cuenta de la utilidad de este instrumento para la exclusión así como la inclusión selectiva. Los campesinos en España se colocaron en la tradición de la Reconquista en la cual la gente del campo había ascendido a través de la posesión de armas y

¹¹ Itic Croitoru Rotbaum: *De Sefarad al Neosefardismo*. Bogotá 1967, p. 139. En esta época el término de “conversos” recibe el sinónimo de “portugueses”.

¹² En 1602 Felipe III ordenó: “[...] he sido informado que van siendo de mucha consideración los ynconvenientes que se siguen y podrian seguirse de pasar y residir en los puertos y partes dese Reyno tantos extranjeros y que especialmente ay muchos portugueses que han entrado con los navios de los negros y en otros xtianos nuevos y gente poco segura en las cossas de nuestra santa fee catholica judayzantes y que en los mas puertos de las yndias ay mucha gente desta calidad y porque estas cossas son en que conviene mirar mucho para que no se siembre algun horror y mala seta entre los yndios que tan poco firmes y ynstruidos estan en las cosas de nuestra santa fe catholica.” Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla (en adelante AGI), Indiferente General, leg. 428, lib. 32, f. 55r.

caballo.¹³ De ahí nace el concepto de hidalguía. Los hidalgos como integrantes de una nobleza empobrecida podían esconder sus calamidades financieras y aumentar su propio valor y prestigio social con la limpieza de sangre. Después de la Reconquista, el hidalgo emprendió la tarea de la conquista. Le convenía un concepto como la limpieza que ubicó a la nobleza por encima de la riqueza, ya que muchos de los exitosos hombres de negocios, comerciantes y esclavistas, eran de origen judío. De tal manera, aún sin grandes caudales, el español en las Indias podía posicionarse en la cúspide de la sociedad colonial excluyendo a los que le superaban en lo económico. Paralelamente, con una argumentación biológica, a las personas de origen judío – debido a su presuntamente infamia, perfidia y malicia inmanente – se les echaba en cara de infectar y contagiar a la sociedad, tanto a los cristianos viejos como a los indios.

Por primera vez, en agosto del 1588 el Tribunal de México contestó una carta de la *Suprema* del 8 de noviembre 1587, avisando que en la Nueva España había “muchos portugueses mercaderes y confesos”.¹⁴ En los años cuarenta del siglo XVII con la independencia de Portugal, el final del gobierno del Conde-Duque de Olivares y las *complicidades* en América, se inauguró la fase final de la lucha contra los conversos.¹⁵ En Mayo de 1642 la Inquisición se quejó ante el Consejo de Indias de “la demasía de portugueses” (muchos de ellos en las milicias, casi todos, como los llamaba la Inquisición, *criptojudíos*) y del peligro de más rebeliones desde las Azores a Brasil y Cartagena de Indias.¹⁶ Con esta presunta conspiración contra la cristiandad, el Santo Oficio justificó el golpe contra los portugueses en Hispanoamérica. La lista de la *complicidad* de México en 1647

¹³ “[...] descenden de los primeros pobladores y conquistadores de esta provincia [Monterrey] y que por ninguna de estas dos líneas haya habido alguna que se ejercite en oficio mecánico y de menos valer, siendo su ocupación la del campo en la labranza y crías de ganados mayores y menores en que se han ejercitado siempre los hijos de este valle, como también en estar contiuno con las armas en la mano para defender a su propia costa el lugar por haber sido el más combatido por los indios bárbaros persiguiéndoles hasta fuera de la provincia y dando auxilio a los lugares circunvecinos cuando lo han necesitado”. Citado por Lilia Villanueva de Cavazos: *Familias de Nuevo León: su limpieza de sangre*. Monterrey, N.L. 1993, p. 112.

¹⁴ Archivo General de la Nación, México, (en adelante AGN), Inquisición, vol. 223, tomo I, f. 109.

¹⁵ Persecuciones inquisitoriales contra las supuestas complicidades de portugueses tuvieron lugar en Cartagena, Lima y México entre 1636 y 1649.

¹⁶ AGN, Inquisición, vol. 407, exp. 12, ff. 438-441.

contiene más de trescientas personas.¹⁷ Sólo en el auto de fe de 1646 salieron 41 judaizantes (de un total de 50) casi todos comerciantes y esclavistas de Veracruz o México con socios y corresponsales en Cartagena, Lima, Manila, Lisboa, Angola y Ámsterdam.¹⁸ No es de extrañar que la Inquisición también se sirviese de la limpieza de sangre para la persecución de los portugueses. Una carta del Tribunal de México dirigida al Consejo de Indias con fecha del 20 de septiembre 1643 aplica el discurso de la limpieza de sangre a los portugueses.¹⁹ Aparte de la amenaza política (ayuda a Portugal, infiltrar el imperio a través de las Filipinas y el Caribe) se justificaba el procedimiento inquisitorial por la mezcla del elemento criminal (“penitenciados”) con la metáfora de la enfermedad biológica, el peligro de una infección y su extensión entre los sanos, que son los cristianos viejos e indios. La infamia, la perfidia y la malicia son “contagiosas”. A partir de entonces el Tribunal novohispano fue instruido a enviar directamente a la Suprema cualquier solicitud de portugueses.²⁰ En este momento eran los judíos el peligro principal para la cristiandad y fue la Inquisición quien protegía la pureza del catolicismo.²¹ Con la persecución inquisitorial contra las supuestas

¹⁷ AGN, Inquisición, vol. 387, exp. 11, s.f.

¹⁸ AGN, Inquisición, vol. 399, exp. 12, ff. 504-523: Relaciones de Causas, 1642-1646.

¹⁹ “Señor: [...] hemos de desterrar desde este reyno a gente tan perjudicial en el como tierra nueva y tan catolica, se libre del contagio que para los tiempos venideros sin remedio. La está amenazando, y lo hemos experimentado al presente y nos hallamos con muchos pressos nacidos en estas partes, hijos y nietos de reconciliados y penitenciados por esta inqu.^{on} que si sus padres y abuelos no huvieran quedado en ellas, cassi del todo tan mala semilla se hubiera arancado, sin inficionar a los christianos viejos por casamientos, ni escandalizar a los indios en los lugar donde se han avecindado; y a esta duda nos ha movido el ver que son todos portugueses o descendientes dellos, y si passassen desterrado a España se podrian comunicar con los traidores de Portugal y si a las Filipinas alli aunarse con los de la Indias y ser causa de grandes daños; y causar los mysmos con justificados rezelos si als islas de Barlovento los desterrassemos y asi estamos por una parte desseosos de lançarlos de este Reyno.” AGN, Inquisición, vol. 416, tomo II, exp. 28 “varios”, ff. 445-446.

²⁰ Solicitud del portugués Juan Yáñez de Avila para familiar. Madrid, 1650. AGN, Inquisición, vol. 504, exp. 4, ff. 273-313.

²¹ El Inquisidor Mañozca al Consejo de Indias por motivo del auto de fe del 16 de abril 1646. AGN, Inquisición, vol. 416, tomo II, exp. 28 “varios”, f. 463. “[...] el valor y esfuerzo del S[ant]o O[fici]o para contrastar el judaísmo, castigarle y desterrarle con los demas errores que se oponen a la pureça de la Yglesia Catholica Romana”. Véase del mismo tono todavía a principios del siglo XVIII en una carta al Consejo de Indias: “para que estos Reynos no se ynfecten de Judios herejes y otros infieles que con pretexto del Real Servicio pasan a esos Reynos y se entran la tierra a dentro dellos en donde oservan sus falsos ritos y ceremonias contra la pureza de nuestra Santa Fee”. AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1176, ff. 140-142.

complicidades de los portugueses en Cartagena, Lima y México entre 1636 y 1649 termina un capítulo importante de la presencia judía en las colonias españolas.²²

EL CASO DE ESTÉBAN ARES DE FONSECA

A continuación, se presentan unos casos ejemplares que tematizan desde una perspectiva microhistórica los caminos de la migración de los conversos dentro y fuera del imperio español y, a la vez, los procesos del *self-fashioning*. En 1635 el capitán Estéban Ares de Fonseca expuso su discurso de vida ante el tribunal de Charcas.²³ Las estaciones que visitó en su largo recorrido fueron los centros de la diáspora de los sefardíes en la época moderna. Ares de Fonseca nació en Coímbra, como adolescente se instaló en Lisboa, y de allí pasó por los pueblos de Beira Alta, Pinel y Trancoso cerca de Belmonte. Ya antes de la expulsión de los judíos la Beira en el norte de Portugal con su capital Viseu tenía una alta densidad de habitantes judíos, algunos de ellos consejeros de Enrique el Navegante en cuestiones de astronomía y cartografía.

Cuando Ares de Fonseca tenía apenas diecisiete años fue procesado y reconciliado por la inquisición de Lisboa. Después pasó la frontera a España y se dirigió a Sevilla. Después viajó a Bayona en Francia, volvió España, precisamente a Zaragoza y Pamplona para dirigirse otra vez a Francia, esta vez pasando por Burdeos y Ruán. También visitó Livorno, Venecia, Trapani y Saloniki. Al final llegó a Ámsterdam y se hizo miembro de la comunidad sefardita. En Ámsterdam existía una sinagoga de los *sephardim* desde principios del siglo XVII. De Ámsterdam viajó a Pernambuco que era a la sazón parte de Nueva Holanda desde el año 1630. Finalmente, Ares de Fonseca pasó la frontera a Charcas en el imperio español y cayó preso de la Inquisición. Cabe añadir que las personas con las que cruzó caminos, parientes y amigos, se caracterizaron por el mismo alto nivel de movilidad.

²² Alfonso Quiroz: The Expropriation of Portuguese New Christians in Spanish America 1635–1649. En: Iberoamerikanisches Archiv 11. Berlín 1985, pp. 407-465.

²³ Archivo Histórico Nacional (en adelante AHN), Inquisición (Toledo), leg. 162, exp. 6. Una transcripción del testimonio de Ares de Fonseca da Julio Caro Baroja: Los Judíos en la España Moderna y Contemporánea. Madrid 1986, T. III, pp. 359-364.

Igual de importante que la migración regional es la autorepresentación de Ares de Fonseca. Caro Baroja lo caracteriza como “malsín”.²⁴ Consta que los datos biográficos que se pueden deducir de los protocolos de la Inquisición reflejan una vida caracterizada por la inquietud y búsqueda. Ares de Fonseca era un hombre adulto de 34 años de edad cuando dio su declaración bajo juramento ante el tribunal de Charcas en 1635. Anteriormente ya había tenido su primera experiencia con el Santo Oficio cuando en 1618 fue reconciliado por el tribunal de Lisboa. La documentación inquisitorial revela toda una gama de estereotipos del converso del siglo XVII. Su recorrido del mundo forma parte de su autorepresentación. Como tantos otros, Ares de Fonseca proviene del noreste de Portugal, una región caracterizada por su alto porcentaje de descendientes de los judíos expulsados en 1492 y convertidos en 1497. Sobre todo, la Beira parecía idónea para afincarse debido, por un lado a su remota ubicación, y por el otro a su cercanía a España. El testimonio de Ares de Fonseca es de especial interés porque colaboró abiertamente con la Inquisición nombrando a varios sefardíes y conversos con los cuales tuvo trato a lo largo de su recorrido. De ahí la etiqueta de “malsín” con la que le tacha Caro Baroja.

De interés especial para los oficiales inquisitoriales era cualquier información sobre holandeses y portugueses, y sobre todo la posible complicidad entre ellos. Así Ares de Fonseca nutrió la curiosidad del tribunal mencionando una “compañía de los judíos de Olanda”. “El dicho Henrique Mendez Peixoto escriuió a los Estados y a los Portugueses Judíos de Olanda los incónuenientes y daños que resultarían de hacerse publica la dha Compañía y como los Estados rebeldes son tan interesados en tener los Portugueses Judíos en su tierra por los avisos consejos y provecho q se les sigue vinieron en ello”.

Es probable que con la “dha Compañía” se hiciera referencia a la “Cofradía de Olanda”. Esta asociación fundada en Ámsterdam se ocupaba de rescatar a los judíos capturados y ayudar a los conversos portugueses a poner sus bienes a salvo en Holanda. Para tal fin existía una caja donde depositar el dinero que se recuperaba al instalarse en Ámsterdam. Los tribunales inquisitoriales en América habían encontrado varios indicios de las actividades de la Cofradía. En

²⁴ Caro Baroja: *Los Judíos en España*, T. III, p. 359. Según el *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana Española* de Sebastián de Covarrubias (1611/2006, p. 1239) el *malsín*, palabra de origen hebreo, avisa de secreto a la justicia de delitos con mala intención y por su propio interés.

la documentación inquisitorial existe también el término “compañía de Olanda” para designar tal asociación, lo cual entre historiadores ha llevado a confusiones con la Compañía neerlandesa de las Indias Occidentales (WIC) fundada en 1621 por el estado holandés.

Pero el testimonio tiene otro aspecto. El acusado se presentó como víctima inocente que había sido persuadido al judaísmo por varios prosélitos. De suma importancia para su vida era su experiencia en Ámsterdam, donde formó parte de la comunidad sefardita y donde acabó por ser circuncidado. El asentamiento en los Países Bajos tuvo consecuencias graves para su personalidad. Tanto Ares de Fonseca como muchos de sus correligionarios cambiaron de nombre y acogieron una nueva identidad. Adoptando un nombre judío expresaba un nuevo sentimiento en el entorno de la libertad de conciencia que parecía ofrecerle su vida en los Países Bajos.

Sin embargo, de sus declaraciones se puede deducir que volviendo al judaísmo se quedó decepcionado. Era judío, pero también portugués. Tal vez fuera por eso que volviese a la Península y necesariamente al cristianismo. No se sabe si la colaboración se debió al arrepentimiento de su decisión de haber reconvertido al judaísmo o a la necesidad de salvar su vida. De todos modos, su biografía ejemplar de “criptojudío” casi no le dejaba otro remedio que colaborar con la Inquisición. Así Ares de Fonseca buscó la solución en la denuncia de otros conversos portugueses. Señaló a varias personas con sus nombres cristianos y hebreos ante el Tribunal de la Inquisición. Durante su proceso Ares de Fonseca se declaró inocente, diciendo que no sabía ni siquiera en qué consistía el judaísmo. Se presentó más como objeto perjudicado por las persuasiones de los judíos portugueses en Holanda y de la presión que las autoridades de la sinagoga de Ámsterdam ejercían sobre él. Con esto Ares de Fonseca demostró la personalidad fragmentada del converso entre su identidad como portugués y su identidad como cristiano nuevo que abrazó la religión de sus antepasados.

La problemática conversión y los consecutivos remordimientos que experimentó Ares de Fonseca recuerdan el conocido caso de Uriel da Costa (“espejo de una vida humana”).²⁵ Da Costa también había nacido en Coímbra sobre el año 1585, es decir que tanto él como Ares de Fonseca eran de una generación que vivía durante la unión de Portugal con España. Provenía de una familia de ricos comerciantes sefardíes convertidos al catolicismo. Durante sus estudios en

²⁵ Uriel Acosta: *Espejo de una vida humana*. Ed. Gabriel Albiac. Madrid 1985.

la universidad le surgieron dudas de la fe cristiana y empezó a practicar en secreto el judaísmo. La familia huyó de la Inquisición y emigró a Holanda, donde cambió su nombre Gabriel a Uriel que es la forma hebrea. Siendo un hombre erudito y escéptico criticó las prácticas intolerantes de la comunidad judeo-portuguesa. Como consecuencia Da Costa fue excomulgado para no llamar la atención de las autoridades neerlandesas y se fue a Hamburgo, pero también en allí fue expulsado. De vuelta en Ámsterdam tuvo que renunciar a sus ideas y recibir 39 azotes para volver a ser miembro de la comunidad de los sefardíes. En vez de volver a la Península, como lo había hecho Ares de Fonseca, da Costa después de semejante humillación se quitó la vida. Es posible que su destino tuviera influencia en las críticas que pronunció Spinoza décadas más tarde en contra de las reglas de la sinagoga de Ámsterdam.²⁶

EL CASO DE MIGUEL DEL VALLE

A mediados del siglo XVII disminuyeron las persecuciones de “judaizantes” de parte de los tribunales del Santo Oficio. Seguió existiendo el delito del judaísmo, aunque en menor cantidad. La documentación inquisitorial de los tribunales americanos da una impresión de los cambios institucionales a lo largo del siglo. Un tratamiento opuesto a la línea dura contra los conversos se manifiesta en un caso de la Inquisición de Nueva España. En el año 1658 Baltasar de Galdiano solicitó el cargo de notario ayudante del secreto en la ciudad de México.²⁷ “No resultando nota contra su limpieza”, el Tribunal de México pidió la información adicional del Consejo de la Inquisición. Durante los siguientes meses el Tribunal de Logroño investigó el caso con el resultado de que los Galdiano eran “comúnmente reputados por xpianos nuevos, descendientes de judíos”.²⁸ En México nadie había esperado este resultado. Por este motivo el inquisidor del tribunal mexicano, Dr. Pedro Medina Rico, intervino directamente a favor de Galdiano:

“En 30 de Junio del presente año recibimos carta de V.A. del 10 de Henero con la resolucion que ha tomado en la pretens[sio]n de Bartolome de Galdiano cuia lastima hemos sentido en

²⁶ James Amelang: *Parallel Histories: Muslims and Jews in Inquisitorial Spain*. Baton Rouge 2013.

²⁷ AHN, Inquisición 1207, exp. 1, s.f.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

n[uestro] coraçon por la experiencia de sus buenos servicios en 18 años que ha asistido a los negocios del secreto y su buen natural y fidelidad y con la consideracion de ver al pobre hombre con muger y nueve hijos e hijas que quiebran el coraçon sin mas amparo que el de Dios nro Señor, y viendole en tanta miseria hemos acudido al R.do Obispo Virey y suplicado le acomode en alguna cossa, y su piedad y mucho amor, y estimacion con que honrra y asiste al tribunal, lo ha ofrecido: y porque no se llegue a entender la causa de la salida del secreto se ha dado a entender, ser mandato de V.A. el que los aiudantes del secreto se quiten, y en esta conformidad; porque creemos que el dho obispo Virey le acomodava brevemente, ya parecido por ocho o quince dias dissimular el que poco a poco vaya faltando del secreto; porque la repentina salida, no le sea causa de ninguna nota, y en este tiempo quedara cumplido y executado lo que manda V.A. en raçon de que no asista: extrajudicialmente se le ha dicho pressente, si tiene algunos papeles, que puedan conducir a su pretenssion, y ha presentado a una ynformacion hecha *ad perpetua memoria* cuia copia autentica remitimos con esta a V.A. en nueve foxas y suplicamos sea servido de mandar hacer las diligencias que convengan, y dolerse quanto sea possible deste pobre, para si hubiere lugar se le de alguna conveniencia o comodidad assi por lo que ha servido como por lo que merece por sus buenos procedimientos que en ello hara V.A. una grande obra de piedad. Mexico Julio 7 del 1664”.²⁹

Al mismo tiempo, Galdiano escribió una carta al Consejo con fecha del 15 de julio 1664 en la que se presentó como víctima de calumnias:

“Creo que habra sido algun rencor o passion de algunos de los de mi lugar que tengan a mis Padres y hermanos o a mi cuñada [...]. Nací en una ciudad corta, y en ella todo chimes y quentos, y quasi tan malas almas que solo procuran haçer mal, mormurando y hechando voces falsas para difamar a quien les parece haverles ofendido quitandoles la honrra”.³⁰

Pero la Suprema ignoró ambas intervenciones. “El 20 de febrero de 1665 mandó el Consejo se juntase con las pruebas. Y no se halla otra cosa”. La información terminó “sin concluir”, es decir: no se aceptaron las pruebas de limpieza de sangre y Galdiano fue suspendido. No obstante, Galdiano encontró un puesto en la administración eclesiástica.³¹

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ Nombramiento de B. de Galdiano como oficial del libro de cédulas de la secretaria de camara de vuestra excelencia. AGN, General de Parte, vol. 14, exp. 84; Nombramiento de B. de Galdiano como repartidor de los pleitos de lo civil y criminal y tasador de esta real audiencia. AGN, General de Parte, vol. 14, exp. 85; Nombramiento de contador ordenador del Tribunal de Cuentas de Mexico, que se dio a Bartolome de Galdiano. AGN, Reales Cédulas, vol. 23, exp. 116.

Galdiano era un miembro integrado a la sociedad novohispana. Era un hombre honrado, ambicioso y hasta entonces exitoso. Al igual que en una relación de méritos, el parecer del tribunal donde trabajaba subraya la cualidad del pretendiente: tenía una larga experiencia de trabajo, en el cual había brindado buenos servicios, y era considerado persona de buen natural y fidelidad que injustamente había caído en desgracia. Medina Rico lo describe como un hombre responsable y formal con familia numerosa que cayó víctima de su propia ascendencia. No fue él el culpable, sino su genealogía manchada a lo que reaccionó presentándose como víctima de difamaciones y calumnias de su pueblo natal. El destino de Galdiano “cui lastima hemos sentido en nuestro corazón”, como formula el inquisidor novohispano, presenta un tono desconocido en la correspondencia inquisitorial. Al final se solucionó el problema con un compromiso. Se suspendió el caso, pero Galdiano a pesar de ser converso no sufrió consecuencias en forma de una investigación inquisitorial, más bien se le colocó en otro ámbito laboral gracias a las redes locales del inquisidor y del obispo.

Otro caso es el proceso del Tribunal de la Inquisición de Cartagena contra Miguel del Valle entre los años 1662 a 1666.³² El proceso empieza con un expediente que contiene el testimonio de Leonor María del Valle, natural de Utrera, y vecina de Sevilla de 26 años, de oficio costurera. En el momento de sus declaraciones llevaba tres meses presa en las cárceles de la Inquisición de Sevilla. Era la hermana del acusado. La fecha data del julio de 1662. Como muchos otros testigos, Leonor María del Valle debía empezar por presentar su genealogía, es decir que el legajo del juicio contiene informaciones biográficas no sólo del acusado, sino también de otros protagonistas, sobre todo los que en aquel momento estaban encarcelados por similares delitos, en este caso “por culpas de judaísmo”. Esto permite reconstruir familias o grupos sociales y sus mutuas interacciones.

Aunque Leonor apareció como testigo, ella misma se sintió como acusada lo cual explica su reacción. El tono de sus declaraciones es defensivo e intenta anti-

³² Miguel Arias del Valle, natural de Utrera, por el delito de judaísmo. AHN, legajo 1621, exp. 11 (Tribunal de Cartagena de indias). Partes del proceso han sido transcritas por Croitoru Rotbaum: *Del Sefarad*, pp. 318-374.

cipar su inocencia. Declaró ser de familia de origen portugués,³³ pero “de casta³⁴ y generacion de Xt-nos viejos”. No se sabe si era ignorante o si usaba la ignorancia como estrategia para salir del apuro al no recordar tantas cosas y al decir otras tantas de manera confusa. Con mucha frecuencia respondía que “no sauia”, “no se acuerda”, “no puede saberlo”, “si se fuere acordando de alguna cosa lo ira digiendo” o “de ellos conocio algunas que aora no se acuerda ni como se llaman ni la causa a que iban”. Junto a su falta de memoria, ella da la impresión de ser trastornada. En la cárcel declaró que en la prisión ella se había mordido la “sangradura” [el pliegue del codo] de los brazos para desangrar su cuerpo. En la siguiente audiencia ella había dicho “muchos disparates diferentes unos de otros, y entre cosas dixo que ella creya en dios solamente en el Dios de Jacob y e Isac, [...] y que auendosi mordido los brazos para desangrarse y morirse Dios auia querido reserbarla la vida para que lo dixese, y que los pajaros le decian que lo dixese”.

A la pregunta si creía en Cristo no contestó; cuando un sacerdote le enseñó la cruz y le pidió que la besase, ella se negó. En otra audiencia no se acordó de este incidente y volvió a decir que era “X-na bautizada, y negaba auerse apartado de la fee de Jessu Xto, y pasandose ala ley de Moisen”. Vino otra audiencia y de nuevo Leonor del Valle dio un cambio de sentido: Afirmó que seguía la ley de Moisés con las prácticas de ayunar, guardar el sábado por fiesta y rezar el Hermosura Adonay.³⁵ Finalmente bajo la amenaza de la tortura acabó por denunciar a toda su familia como judaizantes, incluyendo a sus hermanos Gonzalo, Gaspar, Francisco y Miguel, “el dicho Miguel a el tiempo que a esta la prendieron estaba en salir para embarcarse [a Indias]”. Los otros hermanos, todos mercaderes, ya vivían en América, Gonzalo en Potosí, Gaspar en Cartagena y Francisco en Maracaibo.

En lo particular sobre el proceso, Leonor del Valle dio una descripción personal de su hermano: “Miguel del Valle hermano de esta de beynte y ocho

³³ “[...] aunque sus Padres, y abuelos nacieron en castilla los padres de sus abuelos Paternos auian sido Portugeses no sauia de que lugar fuesen naturales”.

³⁴ El término “casta” significa en el siglo XVII todavía de linaje puro, y no tiene connotación de mezcla como un siglo más tarde.

³⁵ Y la hermosura de Adonay nuestro Dios sea sobre nosotros; Y confirma sobre nosotros la obra de nuestras manos; ¡Sí, la obra de nuestras manos confirma! Salmo 90,17. La eternidad de Dios y la transitoriedad del hombre. Oración de Moisés.

años no ha tomado estado³⁶ paso a Indias y luego dixo que cuando fue presa [Leonor] estaba el dicho su hermano en Cadiz para hacer el viaje a Indias no sabe si lo hizo o no; no es alto de cuerpo color trigueño pelo, y bigote negro y tiene en la cara una señal en un carrillo que no sabe si es el derecho o izquierdo”.

El tribunal de Sevilla pasó la información al tribunal de Cartagena de Indias, que encargó al comisario del Santo Oficio en Maracaibo investigar el caso de Miguel del Valle. Allí en junio del año 1663, varios testigos declararon de forma unánime ante el tribunal que un tal Miguel de Cárdenas y Garnica había llegado a Maracaibo a finales del año anterior. Más tarde Miguel del Valle admitió haber usado este nombre para el pasaje transatlántico. Parece que Don Miguel había emprendido la travesía al Caribe en un barco inglés procedente de las Islas Canarias y más precisamente desde el puerto de Orotava.³⁷ No queda claro cómo llegaron los ingleses a Tenerife, únicamente se menciona un barco robado. Pero consta que en Canarias en el siglo XVII se intensificaron tanto la piratería como el contrabando, gracias en parte al creciente debilitamiento del imperio español a consecuencia de los numerosos conflictos con Inglaterra, Francia y Flandes.

También corrían rumores de que Del Valle al viajar con los ingleses se había declarado judío. Existen más ejemplos similares ya que los moradores del norte de Europa tenían la reputación de vivir con más libertad, inclusive la de la conciencia, y no podían ser perseguidos por instituciones estatales como la Inquisición. En cambio, la vida en las Indias requería vivir con cautela, no llamar la atención y no dar informaciones personales. Al llegar a Tierra Firme Miguel habló con varias personas preguntando por un tal Francisco del Valle a quien se parecía en la cara, como declararon los testigos mencionados. Miguel negó ser hermano de Francisco y dijo que le debía una suma de cien pesos. De las testificaciones también se puede deducir que Miguel del Valle había hecho contestaciones contradictorias sobre su procedencia, diciendo bien que era de Antequera, de Sevilla, de Lima o bien de Canarias. Con esto ya existen algunos datos biográficos de la persona en cuestión. El discurso de vida del reo corroborará estos datos.

³⁶ Contraer matrimonio o ingresar en una Orden religiosa.

³⁷ Hoy Puerto de Santa Cruz, Tenerife.

En vista de las testificaciones, Miguel del Valle presentó su autodenuncia al comisario del Santo Oficio en Maracaibo con fecha del 2 de julio de 1663. Así era más probable obtener una sentencia indulgente. Salvo la genealogía, Miguel del Valle dijo poco de su infancia o adolescencia. Lo que caracteriza su testimonio son más bien episodios curiosos de algunas estaciones de su vida antes de ser hecho preso. Este tipo de información podía ser de interés para la Inquisición. Así, Miguel declaró que de adulto vivía en Málaga, y le había llegado una carta desde Hamburgo de la pluma de un tal Juan Curiel y entregada por un tal Antonio Rodrigues Serrano. La carta trataba de la entrega de una herencia considerable de 2.000 ducados de parte de una persona fallecida en *Ámsterdam* cuya última voluntad era que Miguel recibiese el dinero. Miguel del Valle declaró que en aquel entonces no conocía Juan Curiel ni a Antonio Rodrigues Serrano y que tampoco sabía quién era el fallecido de *Ámsterdam*. Pero en vista de la suma elevada, Miguel viajó a Hamburgo en un barco con mercaderes que querían vender vino. Una vez allí se reunió con Juan Curiel que le pidió que pagase los fletes al capitán del barco, que eran normalmente 20 pesos, pero en su caso 40 por ser judío. Del Valle se mostró indignado de este comportamiento y respondió que era católico. Después se quejó del comportamiento de Curiel ante el “burgo maestro”³⁸ y poco después salió para *Ámsterdam* donde conoció a unos judíos que le convencieron de que se dejara circuncidar. Esta vez Curiel ofreció a Miguel los 2.000 ducados para que se convirtiese al judaísmo.³⁹ Así él explicó la reconversión y la circuncisión: “[...] auia tenido carta de Juan Curiel en que le ofrecia Dos mil ducados porque vibiera en su ley, y mouido de interes, y faltandole la rasson se dejo llebar miserablemente de las persuaciones engañosas”.

Parece ser que Miguel del Valle que (al igual que Ares de Fonseca) no se encontrase a gusto en Holanda. De *Ámsterdam* se fue a Londres y vía Canarias a La Habana y finalmente llegó a Maracaibo. Como ya lo habían declarado otros testigos, antes de llegar a Maracaibo el barco fue atacado por unos piratas que lo saquearon y mandaron desnudar a los viajeros con lo cual Miguel llegó a Maracaibo literalmente en paños menores.

³⁸ alcalde, “Bürgermeister” en alemán.

³⁹ Es posible que la inquisición sospechase que Curiel fuese agente de la Cofradía de los judíos de Holanda.

Del Valle también confirmó las testificaciones anteriores al declarar que fue a Maracaibo vía Canarias en búsqueda de su hermano Francisco para pedir dinero. Añadió que después quería volver a España y presentarse a la Suprema Inquisición. El decreto del fiscal hizo constar “que mudo su Patria y nombre algunas veces, y es Judío Judaizante testificado por su hermana D-a Leonor Maria del valle que dice que ella, y todos sus hermanos Padre y Madre son tales Judíos Judaizantes con que consta que la denunsiasion que hizo ante el comisario de Maracaybo toda es falsa”.

Como consecuencia fue detenido y llevado a Cartagena para ser procesado. La descripción del reo al tiempo de ser encarcelado concuerda con la descripción que dio su hermana (menos la edad): “es de edad de treynta y ocho a quarenta años, alto de cuerpo, moreno de rostro barbinegro con una señal de herida en el carrillo izquierdo, y en la mano derecha tiene los quatro dedos mancos y encojidos los tres de ellos hacia la parte de adentro”.

El primer testimonio de Miguel del Valle ante el tribunal de Cartagena tuvo lugar el 7 de agosto de 1663. Como solía ser usual, al principio estaba la genealogía exhausta de la familia, nombrando a los abuelos paternos que en este caso eran de Sevilla, a los abuelos maternos que eran de Vizcaya y Antequera, al padre y los tíos, todos de Utrera y finalmente a la madre de Alcaudete (Jaén). Quiere decir que del Valle no nombró antepasados de Portugal como lo había hecho su hermana. Más bien esbozó una familia típica con muchos hijos (diez) y un sinnúmero de tíos y tías repartidos por toda la comarca, todos cristianos viejos. Incluso había un padrino con título nobiliario, un tal Don Diego Farfán de los Godos, de una familia ilustre de la región. A la pregunta si había salido de Castilla al extranjero Miguel contestó que había estado en Hamburgo, Holanda e Inglaterra.

El siguiente apartado del testimonio incluye el discurso de su vida. Si en ese momento tuvo 38 años se puede deducir que nació alrededor del año 1625. Miguel del Valle cuenta poco de sus primeros años en Utrera. Se crió en casa de sus padres junto a sus hermanos, yendo a la escuela, donde aprendió a leer y escribir y rezar las oraciones cristianas. Trabajó en un inicio como comerciante de sal y tabaco, tratando con pueblos de la región como Alcalá de Guadaíra cerca de Sevilla (que por su función abastecedora de la capital ya en la época se llama también “Alcalá de los panaderos”), y después amplió sus actividades a ciudades como Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Cádiz y Málaga. Allí se ve una ruptura

en la biografía de Miguel del Valle cuando conoció a Franco Rodríguez Serrano como ya había declarado en su autodenuncia del 2 de julio. Miguel del Valle describió a Rodríguez Serrano como “acaponado, y alto de cuerpo, y demas de cinquenta años, y que no hablaba bien castellano”, probablemente era portugués. Rodríguez Serrano le introdujo a un tal Antonio de Castro López, comerciante de sedas y lienzos. Según del Valle, estas dos personas le convencieron para que decidiera viajar a Holanda. A continuación, él admitió el contacto que había tenido con varios judíos portugueses en Ámsterdam e insinuó que estos contactos le llevaron a la decisión de dejarse circuncidar.

Es difícil explicar este cambio en las declaraciones de Miguel del Valle. Es posible que se hubiese enterado de que su hermano Francisco también estaba preso de la Inquisición. Los cirujanos del tribunal lo contralaron y lo confirmaron. Entonces el fiscal pidió sentencia de excomunión mayor *latae sententiae*, lo cual consistía en relajarlo al brazo seglar junto con la confiscación de todos sus bienes.

A lo largo del proceso inquisitorial se expresan diferentes matices del yo. Mientras que en las primeras audiencias el reo contestó las preguntas del tribunal y describió episodios de su biografía, la actitud del reo y su forma de autorepresentación cambió hacia el final del juicio. Miguel del Valle apareció ante los inquisidores en septiembre del año 1664 después de trece meses de prisión. Ahora el tono de sus declaraciones fue arrepentido, desesperado y suplicante, pidiendo misericordia e implorando el perdón del tribunal: “Dixo que por todo lo que ay y puede auer en su favor pide por la santissima trinidad que se le suelte de la prision en que esta por hauer denunciado de si mismo por temor de Dios nuestro señor, y pedido misericordia, y que todo lo que tiene dicho en su favor desde el día que denunció de si mismo por temor de Dios hasta hoy lo buelbe a decir, y pedir y se atiene dello hoy lo reproduce desta audiencia para todo lo que pudiere ser fauorable [...] ha sido por hauerlo engañado el Demonio por lo qual padece continuo dolor en su coraçon”.

Después de más de un año encarcelado y en vista de la pendiente tortura en el potro, el reo había cambiado la forma de ver la propia existencia. En la cámara de tormento se dramatizó el escenario. Ahora del Valle lloriqueó e imploró: “Mandandosele ligar los braços a la mancuerta, y fue pidiendo misericordia, que tenia aquel brazo malo y que no puede ser atormentado en el, que lo requiere departe de Dios n-ro S-r y que lo vea el cirujano, sea por amor de Dios,

sea por amor de Dios, sea por amor de Dios”. Por la mano lastimada que tenía se le aplicó el potro en los muslos con lo cual llegó a la siguiente fase del estado físico y mental debido al dolor, “ay ay, requiero a V.S. y de parte de Dios, misericordia, señor, pido misericordia y requiero a V.S. y estandole dando una buelta a una pierna dijo misericordia señor, que me matan, Dios mio ay, ay misericordia señor, misericordia Dios mio que me matan, queme muero”.

Del Valle pasó otro año en la carcel hasta la sentencia leída el 7 de noviembre del 1665. “Y el S-or Inq-or D-r Don Pedro de Salas y Pedroso = El D-r D-n Pedro de Bolibar = y el Lic-do Don Joseph Fernández de Ortega = Dijeron que por quanto este reo esta confitente y pide misericordia, y la disminucion que tiene es no confesar algunos complices que se reputa pequeña, y el callar el hauer comido el pan zenceño que es mucho menos que confesar el judaísmo eran de parecer que este reo sea admitido a reconciliación, y salga en auto publico con sanbenito” es decir, sin confiscación de bienes. Parece que algunos miembros del tribunal vieron esta sentencia demasiado mansa y se volvió a dictar la confiscación de bienes cuatro días después, lo cual subraya el disenso de la época al tratar el delito de judaísmo.

En este contexto hay que mencionar el acordado, que asombra con su tono prudente, diferenciado y moderado, criticando la última sentencia en todos los respectos. Dice el texto que

“cuando se impone cadena perpetua no se ha de poner juntamente destierro por que implica contradiccion, y que cuando haya indicios de tener el reo algun delirio, mania o desconcierto el juicio como parece lo dieron a entender los peritos en esta causa respecto de la grande melancolia que dixeron padecía este reo no se debe pasar tan ligeramente como lo hicieron asi en el examen del estado que tenia la salud y capacidad del reo como en darle por reintegrado en ella y así en casos semejantes de parecer no esta el reo en su entero juicio y capacidad para que conste en los autos si lo esta o no o si lo finge se encarga al alcaide y su ajudante le asistan con mucha puntualidad y a diferentes horas y por partes donde puedan oir y ver lo que hace y dice sin ser sentidos y declaran y se pone en la causa mui en particular todo lo que oien decir y ven hacer y si cuida delo necesario y duerme o si no lo contrario, y tambien se probee, le visiten dos medicos diferentes veces y en diferentes tiempos y que cada uno declare con juramento y le ponga por escrito todo lo que supiere, viere y entendiere cerca de la salud, juicio y capacidad del reo diciendo todas las razones medicas y filosoficas en que fundaren su parecer y si pareciere que la falta de capacidad procede de enfermedad y que se puede curar se le cura con todo cuidado y si los peritos no estan conformes en su parecer se llaman otros calificadores si no ai medicos y desta manera se sustancia y examina cosa tan grave que influye en si los autos son validos o no y el mismo examen se hace para conocer si el reo que

a tenido alguna lesion esta ya restituido a su entero juicio y segun lo que destas diligencias resulta se procede en la causa conforme a derecho [...]. Que la segunda acusación que se le puso al reo de perjurio que tambien sea extrañado el aber puesto a este reo a question de tormento para que respondiese derechamente pues solo en el caso de no responder y para obligarle a que responda a lugar el arbitrio de si se le a de dar tormento pero estando este reo confitente lo vastante a constituirle erege formal aun que fuese con disminucion o variacion se debio reserbar el tormento para la definitiva”.⁴⁰

La realidad, sin embargo, fue otra. La sentencia original fue dada por válida. Se retomó la causa en 1678 y se confirmó la cadena perpetua a Miguel del Valle.

CONCLUSIÓN

Los testimonios en los procesos del Santo Oficio contra los conversos se comprenden como documentos que reflejan el *self-fashioning* de la persona que habla. Una de las partes más importantes de los procesos inquisitoriales es el discurso de vida del reo que contiene la genealogía, el estado civil, el grado de la educación⁴¹ e incluso a veces una descripción física del reo. A esto se añade el entrelazamiento con otras vidas. Pues, la parte más voluminosa de un juicio consiste en los interrogatorios a los testigos. Estas declaraciones contienen no sólo informaciones autobiográficas de los mismos testigos, sino además pueden servir para confirmar los testimonios del reo y para añadir más datos a su biografía. Hay que llamar la atención sobre la frecuente unanimidad en las declaraciones de varios testigos que aumenta la probabilidad y autenticidad de los hechos. Estos hechos normalmente se relatan en forma de episodios en los que se reflejan instantes compartidos de las vidas de los actores. Es como en una fotografía o a veces incluso como una escena con sonido, cuando se relatan diálogos que además revelan formas características de comunicación. Un ejemplo para tal escena: Dos conversos portugueses están sentados en una pulpería y entran en conversación y uno de los dos cuenta al otro que ha estado en Ámsterdam donde tiene parientes. El otro se levanta de su aposento “por ver si

⁴⁰ Los (autos) acordados son normas dictadas por los Tribunales superiores de Justicia (en este caso La Suprema), tendientes a reglamentar materias relativas al funcionamiento de los tribunales que no se encuentran lo suficientemente precisadas por la ley.

⁴¹ El tribunal tiene interés especial en conocimientos de idiomas, sobre todo de la lengua hebrea.

alguno estava que les oyesse y por esso no dexava hablar al testigo palabra y le decía que callase *que hauia sol y no le calentava que era decir que no estaban seguros*".⁴² Más tarde los dos fueron denunciados a la Inquisición. De ahí el término de la biografía entrelazada y fragmentada, a la que los textos permiten echar una mirada momentánea.

Si las biografías de reos y testigos se entretejen, esto quiere decir que cambia la perspectiva según el narrador y que se aportan nuevos datos biográficos de las personas involucradas poco a poco. Esto no significa que se obtengan biografías completas, pero posibilita la reconstrucción de entornos sociales con base en los episodios de individuos cuyos caminos se cruzan. Entre ellos aparecen también oficiales o empleados de la Inquisición, vecinos españoles, mulatos y esclavos negros. Pero en su mayoría son cristianos nuevos portugueses lo que se debe a su exclusividad social. Lo que llama la atención es la interacción entre los protagonistas durante el pleito inquisitorial. Las amistades y aún más las enemistades personales entre reos y testigos, junto al constante miedo de ser condenado, desembocan en mutuas denuncias. La esperanza de salvarse o reducir la condena a través de las denuncias crea la riqueza de las declaraciones autobiográficas.

El hecho de que los testigos y reos en vez de una biografía completa cuenten episodios, se debe a las preguntas del tribunal, que está interesado en indicios del sospechado delito de la apostasía. Como consecuencia, estos episodios abarcan toda una gama de informaciones sobre el contexto histórico, por ejemplo, los ingleses en las Islas Canarias, los sefarditas en Venecia, Hamburgo y sobre todo Ámsterdam. Este último puerto acogió a un número elevado de portugueses que querían volver a la religión judaica. Los portugueses no sólo tenían una sinagoga, sino Ámsterdam también era la sede de la Cofradía de los judíos de Holanda. Por ese motivo una de las preguntas más frecuentes del Santo Oficio hace referencia a Holanda como "lugar donde hubiese libertad de conciencia".⁴³ Además el tribunal quiere saber nombres de personas involucradas, ya que la Inquisición en su función de institución estatal complementa sus bases de datos personales. En este contexto interesan falsos testimonios sobre el uso de varios nombres o el lugar de nacimiento para esconder la biografía.

⁴² Proceso contra Sebastián Rodríguez. AHN, Inquisición, leg. 1620/12.

⁴³ Proceso contra Luis Franco. AHN, Inquisición, leg. 1620/5.

Los testimonios también abren una perspectiva psicológica para la formación del *Yo*. Unos ejemplos nos brindan los casos presentados de Miguel del Valle y Ares de Fonseca cuando describen su descontento en Holanda. Es cierto que ambos reos tienen que justificar su circuncisión, pero aun así cabe la posibilidad de que la crítica del entorno sefardí en Ámsterdam sea auténtica como en los casos de Uriel da Costa o Espinoza.

Los relatos autobiográficos dentro del proceso inquisitorial dejan entrever un *Yo* híbrido y polifacético. Pero así suele ser el ser humano en general. Entonces hay que preguntar por lo típico del converso. Es un ser móvil y emprendedor, fugitivo o amenazado, en todo caso con un alto nivel de flexibilidad debido a las circunstancias creadas por un entorno hostil que produce miedo, cautela, egoísmo y búsqueda de compañeros en la desgracia que congenian. Con esto, ya se tiene un esbozo general del converso que se profundizará a continuación. Pues, se argumenta que los procesos contra los conversos en las Indias en la primera mitad del siglo XVII se componen de varias características que permiten componer una imagen del colectivo “portugués”. Las fuentes presentadas no sólo informan sobre el individuo, también permiten la reconstrucción del grupo de los conversos como minoría marginada y perseguida. De los fragmentos biográficos que contienen los legajos de la Inquisición se puede destilar un grupo social definido por rasgos y comportamientos específicos. Para empezar, está el delito de judaísmo de parte de los recién convertidos (cristianos nuevos portugueses) y descendientes de los emigrantes judíos, que después de la expulsión de los reinos de Castilla y Aragón buscaron exilio en Portugal. El Santo Oficio les considera especialmente “tenaces” en lo que la Inquisición llamó “criptojudaísmo”. De hecho, la reemigración unas generaciones después de la unión de las coronas ibéricas llevó a un resurgimiento de los ritos mosaicos. En las complicidades de 1636 a 1649 se ve la perduración de la tradición judaica entre algunos conversos.

Otra característica de los conversos portugueses es que están rodeados por una sociedad hostil que sospecha de ellos como “criptojudíos” por su origen portugués. Los datos biográficos reflejan cierto grado de una vida cotidiana normal moviéndose y dedicándose a sus negocios con cierta libertad. Pero también los factores del miedo y la cautela son determinantes en vista de la posible detención y acusación por la Inquisición. De hecho, las biografías relatadas en las actas inquisitoriales están llenas de angustia y nerviosismo. La

vida de los conversos tanto en España como en las Indias requiere un comportamiento cauteloso y disimulado. En caso contrario, es decir un comportamiento impertinente, podía llevar a una denuncia.⁴⁴

Por lo tanto, los conversos buscan la cercanía de sus parientes y conocidos creando redes que se caracterizan por cierto grado de discreción, seguridad y solidaridad. El origen portugués conlleva en muchos casos una fuerte tradición oral del judaísmo durante generaciones. Pero también el entorno social ejerce presión sobre el converso creando riesgos y peligros a través de sus contactos sociales. Además, no siempre la familia tiene que ser fuente de apoyo incondicional. Muchos portugueses se casan en las Indias con mujeres de casta y muchos declaran que temían una posible denuncia de parte de ellas. En uno de nuestros ejemplos, el de Miguel del Valle, la familia es representada por una hermana con problemas mentales con tendencia hacia comportamientos suicidas y autodestructivos que en el momento del interrogatorio sucumbe a su miedo, confiesa sus delitos y denuncia a otros.

Allí se detecta una de las estrategias de un espectro de posturas típicas de los conversos ante el tribunal inquisitorial: estar a la defensiva; crear de sí mismo una imagen de bondad, compasión y misericordia; ocultar la ascendencia; negar la culpa; colaborar con el tribunal para salvarse. Un ejemplo opuesto da el mismo Miguel del Valle que permanece firme y niega las inculpaciones casi hasta el final del juicio. Pero en vista de los indicios difíciles de justificar (la estancia en Holanda, la circuncisión y el regreso desde Holanda vía Inglaterra a España y a las Indias) debe cambiar de táctica y confesar prácticas como ayunar, guardar las fiestas y rezar oraciones judaicas. Y la posible tortura en la mayoría de los casos acaba con la firmeza anterior del reo. Autodelatarse ante el Santo Oficio era una táctica defensiva que se hizo común entre los sospechosos de judaísmo cuando se consideraban en peligro de ser descubiertos con base en una denuncia por un testigo anónimo. De este modo ganaban tiempo para proteger sus bienes y buscar coartada, o preparar su testimonio antes de comparecer ante el tribunal. Por el mismo motivo, Ares de Fonseca se convierte en denunciante

⁴⁴ Un condenado de nombre Luis Franco no se quitó el sombrero ante una cruz y siendo amonestado por un oficial encima se burló de él y del Santo Oficio: “[...] sin quitarse el sombrero auia buelto el dicho castro y dichole Perro porque te passas assi porque no quitas el sombrero a lo que avia respondido el dho Luis Franco quien le mete en esso es el ynquisidor para mandarmelo de lo cual hubo mucha rissa y murmuracion en la dha ciudad por ser tenido en ella comunmente por todos el dho Luis Franco por judío”. AHN, Inquisición, 1620, exp. 5.

que llama a otros portugueses “fautores y encubridores de hereges”.⁴⁵ Son estrategias con que muchos reos y testigos intentan mejorar su situación. Demuestran arrepentimiento, piden perdón o intentan desviar la atención del tribunal sobre otras personas. Finalmente, es de poner de relieve otra estrategia, la de poner en duda las declaraciones de testigos por ser enemigos suyos. En este caso el reo se declara inocente y fiel cristiano. En cambio, dice que las testificaciones son inculpaciones falsas de sus enemigos, por ejemplo, porque a uno le debe dinero o porque es “pícaro”, “ladrón”, “vellaco”, “hombre inquieto pleitista y mal intencionado” u “hombre de malas entrañas y peores hígados”.⁴⁶

Los testimonios de los procesos inquisitoriales demuestran un alto grado de movilidad de los actores. Si la movilidad de muchos viajeros de la época ya es notable, en el caso de los conversos es superior. Esto se debe tanto a las redes sociales y a las actividades frecuentes de índole mercantil. El destino compartido de la marginación social contrasta con el éxito económico de los portugueses. La migración de los conversos en la época de la diáspora sefardita va normalmente a lo largo de los centros comerciales con sus numerosas comunidades en Francia, Italia, el Imperio Otomano y en los Países Bajos. Además, durante la unión entre Portugal y España se detecta otra fuerte corriente migratoria hacia los centros comerciales de las posesiones ultramarinas de España. La totalidad de este entrelazamiento geográfico refleja el alto grado de movilidad de los portugueses durante esta fase de la primera globalización en la época moderna.

Los contactos entre los conversos, sobre todo los comerciantes y esclavistas, demuestran un alto nivel de interacción. Luhmann ha creado un modelo teórico para analizar contactos de grupos como redes al interpretarlas como componentes específicos de un sistema. El espacio de las interacciones de los actores sirve como marco de referencia con varios subsistemas, las cuales coexisten el uno al lado del otro o de manera entrelazada y tienen su propia comunicación. En este caso el sistema es el Atlántico, y las redes mercantiles de los portugueses en la primera mitad del siglo XVII representan uno de los componentes del sistema atlántico. Se trata de redes transnacionales dentro de un sistema

⁴⁵ Siempre hay varios ángulos de ver las cosas: A una persona dispuesta a colaborar la inquisición llama “buen y verdadero confitente”.

⁴⁶ Todos estos términos se encuentran en la defensa del reo Luis Franco. AHN, Inquisición, 1620/5.

abierto y sin centro.⁴⁷ Es decir, que en la red de los portugueses no existe un núcleo, sino varios nodos conectados. Se nutre de la interacción policéntrica y del intercambio por encima de las fronteras nacionales e imperiales. Las ciudades portuarias con su comercio, cooperación y comunicación son las plataformas de los actores. En estas ciudades se refleja la interacción económica, social y cultural entre los continentes y la agencia (*agency*) de los protagonistas.⁴⁸ Mucho antes de la revolución industrial los puertos servían como puentes entre centro y periferia e incluso entre los imperios.⁴⁹ Así, los comerciantes y negreros portugueses convirtieron con sus redes mercantiles el Atlántico, y en parte también el Pacífico, en espacios abiertos, transformando las poblaciones y sociedades en todos los lados de los dos océanos.

⁴⁷ Niklas Luhmann: *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*. Fráncfort del Meno 1997, T. I, p. 76; Horst Pietschmann (ed.): *Atlantic History. History of the Atlantic System*. Gotinga 2002, p. 39.

⁴⁸ Franklin W. Knight y Peggy K. Liss: *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650–1850*. Knoxville, Tenn. 1991.

⁴⁹ “Mercantilist theories, national rivalries, and nationalist historiography obscure the degree to which a stable pan-Euro-Afro-American economy developed, stretching from Central Europe to Britain, Iberia, West Africa, and the Americas with the Caribbean its western pivot. Despite all the commercial hostilities between rival nations and competitive interests, the pan-oceanic commercial webs that developed as the Atlantic world matured were interwoven, complex, and multitudinous.” Bernard Bailyn: *Atlantic History. Concept and Contours*. Cambridge, Mass. 2005, p. 83.

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RICHARD HERZOG

**Acolhua Past and Novohispanic Merit:
Self and Community in Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl's
Struggles for a *Cacicazgo****

“[W]hereof I have taken and translated the history [...] obtained through hard work and diligence in order to understand the interpretation and knowledge of the paintings and signs that constituted their letters, and the translation of the songs to obtain their true meaning; which [history] will be succinct and clear [...] leaving aside the fables and fictions that appear in some of their histories, since these are superfluous things. [...] It is certain that this history is very reliable and truthful, and approved as such by all important and illustrious people of this New Spain.”¹

In the above-cited foreword to his chronicle *Sumaria relación de la Historia general de esta Nueva España* (1601), the *castizo* nobleman Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl (ca. 1578–1650) claims that he had managed to counter the burning of some of the most important pre-Colombian sources and archives by the Spaniards through meticulously incorporating various indigenous media. For Alva Ixtlilxochitl, this singular access to languages and non-European sources set his writings apart from those of Spanish chroniclers – in effect claiming a more authoritative position for himself.² Written in the early seventeenth century in central colonial Mexico, roughly a hundred years after Hernán Cortés' victory over the Aztec Triple Alliance, the foreword reveals significant tensions in the chronicler's self-perception and self-portrayal. By emphasizing the special role of native elders for passing on pre-Hispanic knowledge to their communities and to him, Alva Ixtlilxochitl essentially inserts himself into a longer tradition of

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¹ Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl: *Obras históricas*. Ed. Alfredo Chavero. Mexico City 1892, Vol. 2, pp. 18-19. All the translations in this chapter are my own.

² *Ibidem*.

indigenous historiography. The last sentence of the above citation also points hyperbolically to the importance in colonial times of having such writings approved by authorities, a central part of the Iberian system of merit writings. Furthermore, as Bradley Benton and others have noted, in Alva Ixtlilxochitl's works we can see a clear self-identification of the chronicler as a native noble from Texcoco, the capital city of the Acolhua population group, in a pragmatic move to assume the *indio* identity required for ruling over a native community. Such a self-image denied his partly Spanish heritage and obscured the fact that his family had ruled over the smaller and less prestigious community of San Juan Teotihuacan, instead of Texcoco.³

The present chapter investigates the relation between political conceptions of native authors and their self-portrayals. Drawing on the work of Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl in this context raises a number of questions: What image does he present of himself in the struggle to conserve his family's traditional rights? What narrative strategies does he use in the process? How did Spanish and native conceptions of the past and of political organization influence each other in shaping the chronicler's self-image? In addressing these questions, this chapter seeks to contribute towards a more general discussion about native participation and strategies in colonial negotiations as well as exploring whether such struggles influenced the formation of new, hybrid forms of narration and of social or political belonging.⁴

This approach builds on Brian Owensby's notion that taking up "Indian political ideas – even in relation to what is sometimes thought of as prepolitical times – carries with it the benefit of broadening the meaning of accepted political terms and looking beyond elite discourse."⁵ Like most authors writing

³ Bradley Benton: *The Lords of Tetzoco. The Transformation of Indigenous Rule in Postconquest Central Mexico*. Cambridge 2017, pp. 124-130.

⁴ A variety of terms has been used for the group of authors active in early colonial New Spain (and Peru): Including "*historiadores indigenas y mestizos*" by Manuel Carrera Stampa and "*indios ladinos*" by Rolena Adorno. In using "native" throughout the article I am following a usage that is common in current English-language scholarship. It is not meant here as a homogenization of the different indigenous population groups but, rather, as an attempt to transcend colonial *casta* terminology which would have ascribed each author to a specific *casta* group. Compare Stephanie Wood: *Transcending Conquest: Nahuatl Views of Spanish Colonial Mexico*. Norman, OK 2003, p. 5.

⁵ Owensby: *Indian Justice*, p. 304.

about the pre-Hispanic past, Alva Ixtlilxochitl was a learned member of the native elite who dealt with a complex web of ethnic groups and authorities in his struggles for personal and family rights. Indigenous city councils (*cabildos*) of the community headed by his family and nearby communities added credibility to his claims, petitions to the viceroy led to repeated confirmations of their rulership rights, and petitions to the Spanish Crown aided Alva Ixtlilxochitl's own career. These measures taken by the chronicler served as a means to regain family rights over lands that had been usurped by Spaniards as well as native commoners and other native nobles. Owensby's focus on elite discourse can, thus, be broadened in order to distinguish between Spanish, creole, and native elites and to make clear how Alva Ixtlilxochitl's writings used the narratives familiar to metropolitan and Novohispanic elites. At the same time, this chapter aims to show how his writings transcended these same narratives by incorporating pre-Hispanic concepts and values.

The first section of this chapter provides background to Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl's judicial struggles through a brief discussion of political organization and native rulers in central Mexico in pre-Hispanic and early colonial times. Of special interest are the ways in which Spanish-American units like the *cacicazgo* were built upon pre-Columbian structures such as the *altepetl*. The second section discusses how Alva Ixtlilxochitl drew on his ancestors' past in order to further his own standing and that of his family. He wrote various chronicles in Spanish dealing primarily with his Acolhua ancestors.⁶ The last of these, now known as the *Historia de la nación chichimeca* (hereafter HC), written around 1625, is considered his most complete work and will form the main focus of this chapter. The above-mentioned *Sumaria relación*, which Alva Ixtlilxochitl wrote in 1601, will be drawn upon as a point of comparison to the HC. Throughout, my focus lies on examining how Alva Ixtlilxochitl's work on the Acolhua was intimately tied up with proving the worth of his family and their ancestors.

⁶ For a detailed bibliography of his work see Edmundo O'Gorman: Estudio introductorio, in: Alva Ixtlilxochitl: Obras históricas. Mexico City 1975, Vol. 1, pp. 177-228.

**POLITICAL ORGANIZATION AND NATIVE ELITES IN
THE VALLEY OF MEXICO**

At the time of conquest in the early sixteenth century, the major power in the Valley of Mexico was the Triple Alliance, made up of three Nahuatl-speaking population groups: the Acolhua (with the capital city of Texcoco), the Tepanec (of Tlacopan), and the Mexica (of Tenochtitlan). The Mexica had come to dominate the Triple Alliance only a few decades before and exacted tribute from subjugated and allied states. Their rapid expansion was aided by the fragmentation of central Mesoamerica into a variety of dominions and states of varying sizes. However, Mexica hegemony was not built on a unifying religious system or a pervasive imperial ideology, and latent inner conflicts would prove decisive for the eventual outcome of the Aztec–Spanish War.⁷ Nonetheless cultural, religious as well as socio-political elements common to many Mesoamerican cultures would persist during colonial times and beyond.⁸

Organization of the Nahuas in pre-colonial and continuing into colonial times was built on the *altepetl*, which can be broadly translated as an ethnic city state. In pre-colonial central Mesoamerica, every sub-*altepetl* (including cities) had its own *tlatoani* or ruler, who held the highest political, administrative, and judicial authority in a given state and headed both the military apparatus and the organization of tributes. This dynastically organized elite was of special importance, guaranteeing the continuation of an *altepetl* even when it moved.⁹ Elke Ruhnau argues that *altepetl* designated, among other things, a states' territory. From her perspective, it is not a political-territorial segment in the strict sense but, rather, formed the largest unit within the system of political-territorial segmentation of pre-Columbian central Mesoamerica.¹⁰

⁷ Pietschmann: Geschichte Mexikos, pp. 13–20.

⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 9–10.

⁹ Elke Ruhnau: Die politische Organisation im vorspanischen Chalco. Eine Untersuchung anhand von Werken des Domingo Muñón de Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuauitzin. Hamburg 1988, p. 25. See also James Lockhart: The Nahuas After the Conquest. Redwood City, CA 1992, pp. 102–110.

¹⁰ Ruhnau: Die politische Organisation, pp. 19–20. For Lockhart a main feature of the *altepetl* was their cellular organization, with a division of political units into four or six equal parts. Following a rotational principle each unit (or sub-*altepetl*) in turn had a dominant role

Below the *altepetl* hierarchically were various smaller units within the Nuhua segmentary system: *Calpulli* and *tlaxiqlacalli* could designate a smaller district or a group of people with specific (administrative, judicial, political and/or religious) roles; *tlayacatl* could mean a socio-political segment on a higher level and was used in this way for Chalco by the native colonial author Domingo de Chimalpahin.¹¹ While a more detailed discussion of these concepts would go beyond the scope of this article, it is important to note here that the highly complex segmentary system of the Nuhua was often reorganized as a consequence of colonial measures but, nonetheless, continued to exert major influence during the colonial era.

Following the Aztec-Spanish wars, the Spaniards began early on to establish *encomiendas* and church congregations in New Spain. *Encomiendas* were public grants of rights to tribute provided by an indigenous socio-political unit and sought after by conquistadors and their descendants. However, these newer structures were superimposed over the existing *altepetl* structures and, at least in the beginning, were still dependent on local dynastic rulers, with *encomiendas* as well as church parishes tending to follow *altepetl* borders, while native villages often followed *calpulli* structures. This meant that, up to the mid-sixteenth century, both *altepetl* and *calpulli* borders stayed largely intact, and pre-colonial divisions were often consolidated. Contributing to this process was the introduction of the *cabecera-sujeto* system, in which each province was ruled by one main city (*cabecera*) to which smaller towns (*sujetos*) were subject.

During the later sixteenth century, factors such as catastrophic native depopulation and reorganization of native work increased the fragmentation of *altepetl* organization. *Altepetl* increasingly formed *calpullis* and even smaller territorial units.¹² However, where *altepetl* identification decreased in certain areas, this could lead to local identities being tied to *calpullis*. Owensby has noted that, although the “*altepetl*’s hold on the indigenous imagination might [have] be[en]

over the others during a specified time period, see Lockhart: *The Nahuas*, pp. 15-20.

¹¹ The definition of these terms is not uniform. It is probable that one key difference between *calpulli* and *tlaxilacalli* was the latter term’s focus solely on religious functions. *Tlayacatl* seems to have been used most prominently by Chimalpahin, for socio-political segments within the *altepetl* of Chalco; Ruhnau; *Die politische Organisation*, pp. 20-21; see also Lockhart: *The Nahuas*: p. 21.

¹² Owensby: *Indian Justice*, pp. 27-28.

slipping; the *calpulli*'s remained vital to the very idea of community – though it was hardly untouched by the maelstrom swirling around it.”¹³ This political and administrative reorganization naturally had major effects on the native elites and commoners of central New Spain.

The many similarities between the structure of native rulership and the Iberian organizational unit called *mayorazgo* were recognized and built upon early on by the Spaniards. In Spanish America, this institution came to be called *mayorazgo regular* for Spanish families and *cacicazgo* when headed by indigenous families. The *cacicazgo* was a set of landed properties from which a family would receive an annual rent that its members would try to perpetuate for future generations. They acquired varying characteristics in different regions in New Spain, depending on the respective pre-Hispanic customs but also on unequal levels of colonial presence in each region.¹⁴ At the turn of the seventeenth century, native nobles continued to hold on to royal land grants they had received because of their ancestral rights while often selling parts of their *cacicazgos* to Spaniards. Native commoners or *macehuales*, on the other hand, were not entitled to such individual claims and depended on the *caciques*' goodwill to represent their villages before colonial courts.¹⁵

Although commoners' success was by no means guaranteed, judicial contests, especially between natives and Spaniards around Mexico City and Puebla, increased from the 1570s. By the 1580s, Spaniards often acquired lands from indigenous owners, formalizing them by requesting royal favors (*mercedes*) afterwards – a widely used procedure, seeing how land represented one of the main sources of income for indigenous nobles and communities. Following the royal *composición de tierras* of 1591, indigenous *caciques* could sell their lands

¹³ Ibidem, p. 28.

¹⁴ Margarita Menegus Bornemann: El cacicazgo en Nueva España. In: Margarita Menegus Bornemann and Rodolfo Aguirre Salvador (eds.): El cacicazgo en Nueva España y Filipinas. Mexico City 2005, pp. 53-54.

¹⁵ Pre-Colombian Nahuatl society was hierarchically organized, based on division of labor, and highly differentiated. Below the rulers the elite was made up of priests and warriors, followed by the *macehuales*. The latter were responsible for work and production and were made up of commoners but also drafted labor and slaves; see Pietschmann: Geschichte Mexikos, p. 12, p. 19. Native commoners would continue to use the term *macehuales* as self-description throughout colonial times, and it was taken up by the Spanish as well; see Lockhart: The Nahuatl, p. 96.

more easily. Destitute *caciques* would sell unpopulated lands, while native commoners increasingly asked for royal protection or *amparo* for their lands.¹⁶ Then again, Susan Kellogg has argued that such litigation also “served as a powerful instrument of cultural hegemony, as lawsuits divided the indigenous population and diverted its attention from broader issues of exploitation and injustice,” thus contributing to the indigenous population’s “pacification, transformation and acculturation.”¹⁷ In this vein, the judicial struggles of Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s family formed part of the widespread lawsuits used by and against both native elites and commoners throughout the colonial period.

Native noble authors educated by religious orders such as the Franciscans were fluent in Latin, Spanish and Nahuatl and used their writings to extol their ancestors’ pre-Hispanic societies.¹⁸ The major role of genealogies and marriage policies for Nahua elites was even amplified in many cases via the workings of the colonial bureaucracy. Through a process María Martínez has called the “colonial vassalage pact,” native communities and nobles could hold on to their ancestors’ traditional rights and properties in return for their acceptance of Christianity and Spanish rule.¹⁹ Because native legal documents were officially recognized, Nahua litigants could draw on arguments based either on Spanish laws or on native concepts, especially during the sixteenth but also into the seventeenth century.²⁰ Such a process of “mutual accommodation” meant that although Spanish legal processes eventually came to dominate native concept-

¹⁶ Owensby: *Indian Justice*, pp. 16-18. With the *composición de tierras* the Crown additionally provided native individuals with the *amparo*, an additional measure to the *mercedes*. The *amparo* was a judicial order protecting lands owned by native villages or individuals. Once again, oftentimes *caciques* profited from the *amparos*’ idea of a royal protection for native commoners; see Owensby: *Indian Justice*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁷ Susan Kellogg: *Law and the Transformation of Aztec Culture, 1500–1700*. Norman/London 1995, p. 4.

¹⁸ Serge Gruzinski: *Painting the Conquest. The Mexican Indians and the European Renaissance*. Transl. Deke Dusinberre. Paris 1992, pp. 103-118, pp. 150-158.

¹⁹ María Elena Martínez: *Indigenous Genealogies: Lineage, History, and the Colonial Pact in Central Mexico and Peru*. In: Gabriela Ramos and Yanna Yannakakis (eds.): *Indigenous Intellectuals. Knowledge, Power, and Colonial Culture in Mexico and the Andes*. Durham/London 2014, pp. 174-175.

²⁰ Kellogg: *Aztec Society*, p. 7; Elizabeth Hill Boone: *Stories in Red and Black. Pictorial Histories of the Aztecs and Mixtecs*. Austin, TX 2000, p. 22.

tions, the comparatively malleable legal framework allowed native people to strategically influence the results of lawsuits.²¹ By knowingly drawing on Iberian and Nahua narrative traditions, Alva Ixtlilxochitl managed to strengthen his position vis-à-vis native city councils and, more importantly for the conservation of his family's rulership, vis-à-vis colonial authorities.

FERNANDO DE ALVA IXTLILXOCHITL: FROM TEXCOCO TO SAN JUAN TEOTIHUACAN

Like most native chroniclers, Alva Ixtlilxochitl descended from the highest rungs of Nahua nobility and was directly related to the Acolhua rulers of Texcoco. Because of the access that the city provided the Alva family to pre-Hispanic rulership, it held a special place in Alva Ixtlilxochitl's self-positioning as his *patria*. As the second son of the *cacica* Ana Cortés, her inheritance of rule (*cacicazgo*) over the small community of San Juan Teotihuacan went first to Alva Ixtlilxochitl's older brother and then to his own son. Here we can see an example of the transition from pre-colonial matrilineal to more patrilineal Spanish inheritance models. Ana Cortés was the last in a line of female *cacicas* of colonial Teotihuacan spanning three generations. With the last two *cacicas* having married Spaniards, the Indianness of Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl and his siblings was increasingly challenged during court proceedings, as *mestizos* descending from European and native parents were prohibited from inheriting *caciaczgos* from 1576 onwards. According to the Spanish American *casta* system, Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl would have been considered a *castizo*, as the child of the *mestiza* Ana Cortés and the Spaniard Juan Pérez de Peralda.²²

In pre-Hispanic times Teotihuacan had been one of fourteen *altepeme* paying tribute to Texcoco. Marital unions between the rulers (*tlatoque*) of these states

²¹ Kellogg: Aztec Society, p. 82.

²² Peter B. Villella: Indigenous Elites and Creole Identity in Colonial Mexico, 1500–1800. Cambridge 2016, pp. 119-121; Bradley Benton: The Outsider: Alva Ixtlilxochitl's Tenuous Ties to the City of Tetzoco. In: Colonial Latin American Review 23, no. 1 (2014), p. 23. By way of his maternal grandmother, the *cacica* Francisca Verdugo, Alva Ixtlilxochitl descended from the pre-Hispanic Acolhua ruler Nezahualpilli and of Cuitlahuac, the penultimate ruler of Tenochtitlan. For a concise history of the Teotihuacan *cacicazgo*, see Guido Munch Galindo: El cacicazgo de San Juan Teotihuacán durante la colonia, 1521-1821. Mexico City 1976.

and noble women from Texcoco were supposed to demarcate Teotihuacan's subaltern status, a common Nahua practice.²³ Underlining such dynastic connections in his Spanish writings, Alva Ixtlilxochitl used official documents such as wills, family trees, and letters to Spanish officials in order to successfully defend his mother's *cacigazgo* of Teotihuacan.²⁴ From 1610, he succeeded in reincorporating some of the lands that had been taken over by indigenous people or Spaniards into the family's lordship (*señorío*) by reaffirming the viceregal protection his family's *cacicazgo* had received since the early colonial period. He then officially asked for an interpreter from the *Real Audiencia*, in order to record an authorized translation of all plots belonging to his parents. As a last requirement, a document called a *probanza* was drafted. As part of this lengthy process, local witnesses were asked to testify whether the *caciciques* descended from the land's pre-Hispanic rulers and whether its properties had formed part of the *cacicazgo* "since time immemorial." The political elite of San Juan Teotihuacan participated in the creation of the *probanza*, among them its governor, *alcaldes* (municipal magistrates) and *regidores* (local judicial officials). By 1611, the descent and rights of the *cacica* Ana Cortés to *cacicazgo* and specific lands had been confirmed by the *Real Audiencia*.²⁵ Primarily through Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl's work, the *cacicazgo* had received a solid judicial basis that would serve the family's later generations, who would retain it throughout the colonial era. Nonetheless, the family's rights continued to be challenged by Spaniards or even by other branches of the Alva family. Because of this, Alva Ixtlilxochitl's mother repeatedly and successfully petitioned the Viceroy for support.²⁶ Their Acolhua ancestors were clearly central to the family's rights as well as to the chronicler's professional advancement, since as a second son he could not hope to inherit the *cacicazgo*.

²³ Benton: *The Outsider*, p. 41.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 50-51; Villella: *Indigenous Elites*, p. 120.

²⁵ Munch Galindo: *Cacicazgo*, pp. 22-23. For a copy of the *probanza* and of other petitions by Alva Ixtlilxochitl, see Munch Galindo: *Cacicazgo*. Apéndice I, pp. 46-48.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 24-25.

THE ACOLHUA'S ORIGINS

As mentioned above, for Alva Ixtlilxochitl, one important way of affirming his and his family's merits vis-à-vis Spanish officials was through his major corpus of historical writings. In the HC, Alva Ixtlilxochitl traces a broad historical development, focusing mostly on pre-colonial times. He recounts the Nahuatl myth of the world's creation, explains the ways in which the Nahuatl divided human history into four periods or "suns," and provides an account of the migration of various northern Chichimeca tribes into Central Mexico as well as their acculturation by mixing with the native Toltecs from around 1000 AD.²⁷ From this historical point onwards, his main focus lies on the various Acolhua rulers, with more precise dates now given in both Christian and Nahuatl chronologies, and on their high degree of socio-political development as well as their distinguished political position within the pre-colonial Valley of Mexico. The chronicle goes on to recount the Spaniards' early conquest campaigns, beginning in 1519 and breaking off during the fight for the Mexica capital of Tenochtitlan in 1521 – probably because the work was left unfinished due to the author's death in 1650.²⁸

One of the chronicle's main goals is to present the author's ancestors – the Acolhua and especially their rulers – in a flattering light. For this purpose, Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl emphasizes the genealogical mixing of the early Acolhua-Chichimeca rulers with mostly noble Toltec women. These descriptions reveal Alva Ixtlilxochitl drawing on and manipulating pre-colonial geography and political organization, using various early colonial codices, which consisted of geographical drawings in combination with glyphs and sometimes written notes, as his main sources on pre-Hispanic history.²⁹ Alva Ixtlilxochitl's main

²⁷ For most Nahuatl groups, stories of how their specific group of nomadic, warlike Chichimeca ancestors migrated from Northern Mexico to the Valley of Mexico were of central importance. Similarly, the Toltecs who headed a state centered on the capital Tula in the early post-classic period (ca. 900–1168) were seen as cultural predecessors by the Nahuatl. See Pietschmann: *Geschichte Mexikos*, pp. 11-13.

²⁸ Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl: *Historia de la nación chichimeca*. Ed. Vázquez Chamorro. Madrid 2000, p. 17.

²⁹ *Codex Xolotl*. Ed. Charles E. Dibble. Salt Lake City, UT 1980, p. 119; O'Gorman: *Estudio introductorio*, p. 80.

sources, the *Mapas Quinatzin* and *Tlotzin* as well as the *Codex Xolotl*, were also produced in early colonial times, with the latter forming the basis as the chronicler's "*historia original*." It is likely that their unknown authors were earlier scions of the Acolhua rulers who similarly based their codices on earlier sources. Eduardo Douglas assumes that the *Mapas* and the *Codex* were produced in the early 1540s and served to regain confiscated lands. The noble native authors had to exclude palpable signs of indigenous autonomy and religion in order to prevent allegations of idolatry, all the while addressing a native audience within its own frame of reference.³⁰ Building on these codices from earlier colonial times, Alva Ixtlilxochitl performed a similar balancing act of carefully curating the native past, with similar intentions to preserve lands and titles.³¹

The basic outline of the HC corresponds to the narrative depicted in his sources: The early Chichimeca ruler Xolotl's peaceful construction of an empire in a formerly Toltec region; the imperial consolidation under Xolotl's descendants through the distribution of territories to population groups that migrated after the arrival of the Chichimeca, including the Acolhua; as well as the Chichimeca's gradual adoption of the sedentary Toltec culture (including urban development, agriculture, and burials), primarily via intermarriage with noble descendants of the Toltecs. This last point was crucial for both Alva Ixtlilxochitl and his sources, because for the Nahuatl the Toltecs had come to epitomize culture, as reflected in their arts and high level of social development. Before the arrival of the Spaniards, for most Nahuatl groups, including the Mexica, claiming descent from both the cultured Toltecs and the martial Chichimeca was a necessity. This was in part connected to the importance of dynastic intermarriage within the Nahuatl's matrilineal descent system.³²

³⁰ A cautionary example to the codices' authors was the court case of Don Carlos Ometochtzin Chichimecateatl, former ruler of the Acolhua capital of Texcoco. In 1539 he was accused of apostasy, incitement, and concubinage by the first bishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumárraga, and following a trial was burnt at the stake. Fears of similar persecution led to many native nobles destroying or hiding their pre-Hispanic manuscripts. See Eduardo J. Douglas: Figures of Speech: Pictorial History in the 'Quinatzin Map' of about 1542. In: *The Art Bulletin* 85, no. 2 (2003), pp. 282-86.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² Martínez: *Indigenous Genealogies*, pp. 178-179.

For the most part, Alva Ixtlilxochitl follows the earlier colonial-era sources in their focus on Toltec–Chichimec intermarriages, incorporating some of the legitimizing depictions tied to the earlier native authors' own interests. Yet, he also adds to these depictions – originally articulated via drawings and glyphs – by translating them into writing and, sometimes, embellishing them. By way of such strategic writing, we can draw a line from the political interests put forward in codices produced by earlier Acolhua nobles from the mid- to late-sixteenth century up to Alva Ixtlilxochitl's writing a generation later. This in itself is not exceptional, as a similar process has been noted for other writers, such as the Tlaxcalan Diego Muñoz Camargo building on the early colonial pictorial *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* in the late sixteenth century or, roughly in the same timeframe, native interpreters reworking the positions of older native respondents, in their contributions to the Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún's monumental *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España*.³³ What is notable about Alva Ixtlilxochitl is his foregrounding of sources, some of which have luckily come down to us, all the while at least partly manipulating them.

One example of this manipulation is Alva Ixtlilxochitl's taking liberties with the aforementioned dynastic connections between the Chichimecs and the early Acolhua. Of special importance here is his detailed depiction of the marriage of the Acolhua ruler Huetzin's parents. According to Alva Ixtlilxochitl, Huetzin's father was Tlacotzin, son of the first Acolhua ruler in the Valley of Mexico, while his mother Malinalxochitzin descended from the Chichimeca through Xolotl's son Nopaltzin, who in turn had been married to the daughter of the last Toltec ruler.³⁴ The HC thus connects the Acolhua to major Chichimeca and Toltec rulers (the latter having intermarried with both population groups), although the Acolhua–Chichimeca connections at least are not explicitly mentioned in his native sources, as Dibble observes.³⁵ Crucially, according to the HC, these unions produced the later rulers of Texcoco, positing a dynastic

³³ Victoria Ríos Castaño: Translation as Conquest. Sahagún and Universal History of the Things of New Spain. Madrid 2014, pp. 201-222.

³⁴ Alva Ixtlilxochitl: *Historia de la nación chichimeca*, pp. 27-30. According to Alva Ixtlilxochitl, various other chichimeca groups followed those of Xolotl to the Valley of Mexico, in the year 1011, 47 years after his migration. These included the Acolhua, the Tepanecs, and later on the Mexica, see *ibidem*, pp. 27-28.

³⁵ See Codice Xolotl, pp. 36-37.

connection running (indirectly) from Xolotl to Alva Ixtlilxochitl's direct ancestors. This connection would seem intended to provide further political legitimacy as well as historical depth to the chronicle's overarching narrative.

In the HC, the Acolhua are not only elevated with the help of genealogy but also through depictions of pre-colonial polities. This is evident in the example of Xolotl, who according to Alva Ixtlilxochitl attributed lands to rulers who, in turn, owed him tribute, recognizing him as the "supreme and universal lord [...] of this land Anahuac."³⁶ This description appears more reminiscent of medieval ideas of vassalage than of Mesoamerican political and genealogical relations. By drawing on a vassalage concept more familiar to European readers, Alva Ixtlilxochitl seems to be making his depiction of the Chichimeca under Xolotl as the then-dominant power clearer for his intended audience: members of the colonial administration. As we have seen, he had already dynastically connected the Acolhua to the Chichimeca, so this showcasing of the latter's supreme power would also increase his ancestors' standing as well as his own merit.

As for the Chichimeca realm, in his earlier chronicle, entitled *Sumaria relación*, Alva Ixtlilxochitl supplements its extent by adding various places in comparison to its depiction in the *Codex Xolotl*.³⁷ While the HC is less exaggerated in its geographical depiction, it still has the Chichimeca realm stretching over a large area of Central America: from Tochpan in the West to La Huasteca in the East to Nicaragua in the South, spanning between both oceans. As Patrick Lesbre notes, this huge area includes various states that were actually independent of the Chichimeca – making it appear more like New Spain than the pre-Hispanic Valley of Mexico.³⁸

Through such additions to his work the chronicler once more makes the Chichimeca and the later Acolhua realms appear more powerful, while also

³⁶ Alva Ixtlilxochitl: *Historia chichimeca*, p. 26. Anahuac is the Nahuatl term for the pre-colonial Valley of Mexico

³⁷ The full title is *Sumaria relación de todas las cosas que han sucedido en la Nueva España, y de muchas cosas que los Tultecas alcanzaron y supieron desde [sic] la creación del mundo hasta su destrucción y venida de los terceros pobladores chichimecas hasta la venida de los españoles sacada de la original Historia de esta Nueva España*. The title's "original Historia" is presumably in reference to the *Codex Xolotl*.

³⁸ Alva Ixtlilxochitl: *Historia chichimeca*, pp. 25-26; Patrick Lesbre: Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl et son Histoire [de la nation] chichimèque. In: *Nuevo Mundo. Mundos Nuevos, Débats* (2010), pp. 41-43. Accessed May 15, 2018. <http://nuevomundo.revues.org/59357>.

simplifying indigenous political relations and positing a centuries-long continuity from his ancestors' territories around the year 1000 to the viceroyalty of his own time. In his detailed analysis of Texcoco sources, Jongsoo Lee has shown that Texcoco was still in the process of becoming a stable and politically influential state as late as the early fifteenth century. Whereas Alva Ixtlilxochitl and his sources describe Texcoco as being in political hegemony during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they are contradicted by the historical realities uncovered by later research: Texcoco itself was one of various Acolhua *altepetl* that would only replace Coatlichan as the Acolhua capital under Nezahualcoyotl's rule in the 1430s.³⁹ For present-day readers, the overall image is one of both the earlier Acolhua codices and Alva Ixtlilxochitl playing up in different ways Acolhua ties to the Chichimeca realm as well as Texcoco's political importance.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that the change in medium between Alva Ixtlilxochitl's painted original sources and his written chronicles would have led to changes in interpretation. In his analysis of the *Codex Xolotl*, Dibble notes that Alva Ixtlilxochitl followed Nahuatl comments appended to the codices later on more closely than the original pictographs. Such a use of his sources may have been the result of Alva Ixtlilxochitl's own difficulties in interpreting the pictographic narratives, but it also suggests the value he himself ascribed to the written word as a form of communication being less prone to "fables and fictions." As a chronicler, he used these codices to make Anahuac appear closer to colonial Mexico, always keeping his Spanish audience as well as his terminology in mind.

TEXCOCO: ALTEPETLAS NACIÓN?

Having shown above how Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl built upon his sources to increase his Acolhua-Chichimeca ancestors' standing, the present section deals with his use of political terminology surrounding the Acolhua. At this point, his narrative moves closer to the conquest period. My focus here on Alva Ixtlilxochitl's terminology aims to provide insight into why he applied specific

³⁹ Jongsoo Lee: *The Allure of Nezahualcoyotl: Pre-Hispanic History, Religion, and Nahua Poetics*. Albuquerque, NM 2008, pp. 93-95.

political terms and concepts in certain ways as well as to speculate on the intentions he may have tied to them, which I propose are closely connected to the chronicler's self-perception and his self-portrayal in official documents. Alva Ixtlilxochitl wrote in Spanish in order to have his writings recognized by colonial authorities. This means that the pre-colonial *tlatoque* are described as “*reyes y señores*” and political units of Mesoamerica as “*ciudades*” and “*provincias*.” In this context, scholars including James Lockhart have described the Acolhua chronicler's knowledge of pre-colonial political units as having been “deficient.”⁴⁰

However, Alva Ixtlilxochitl's detailed descriptions in the HC of the different types of pre-Hispanic land and labor organization contrast with such opinions, showcasing his knowledge of pre-Hispanic as well as Hispanic models. Furthermore, as chronicler, Alva Ixtlilxochitl discusses how the pre-Hispanic ruler Nezahualcoyotl divided the *altepetl* of the Acolhua into eight parts, headed by one administrator (“*mayordomo*”) each, and lists the tributes each of the parts had to pay to the Acolhua rulers. It seems clear that Alva Ixtlilxochitl would have had an interest in setting down for colonial authorities these subordinates and the tributes they paid to his ancestors.⁴¹ Instead of a lack of knowledge, the author's peculiar use of Iberian terms for Nahuatl political concepts may rather point to the necessity he felt of making the pre-Colombian past recognizable to the Spanish officials he was addressing.

At first glance, the HC seems to simply contain a large number of terms used interchangeably for political units. In addition to the aforementioned “*provincial*,” we find “*pueblo*,” “*reino*,” “*república*,” “*imperio*,” as well as the more prominent “*nación*” and “*patria*.” On second glance, however, certain patterns in their use reveal themselves. Before looking at their concrete usage, it is important to note that the term *nación* was widely used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Spanish literature and, during the seventeenth century,

⁴⁰ Lockhart: *The Nahuas*, p. 25.

⁴¹ In chapter XXXV of the HC Alva Ixtlilxochitl distinguishes various types of lands tied to different groups of Nahuatl society, including the rulers (*tlatoque*) and their offspring, the nobility, commoners, as well as the three leaders of the Triple Alliance. They include *tlatocatlali*, *itónal inlácatl*, *tecpantlali*, *calpollali* or *altepetlali* (tied to the *calpulli* or *altepetl*), *pillali* and *yaotlalli*; see Alva Ixtlilxochitl: *Historia chichimeca*, pp. 90-92. On Nahuatl forms of land organization see Lockhart: *The Nahuas*, pp. 141-175, esp. p. 161.

the territorial use of the nation concept became more frequent. More specifically, according to Martínez a common meaning of *nación* in early modern Europe referred to a group with the same origin, including shared birthplace, lineage as well as language and culture.⁴² It should be noted that *nación* in Iberia did not hold only positive connotations, as it took into account religious backgrounds as well. For example, Jews converted to Christianity or *conversos* were known pejoratively as *gente de la nación hebrea* or *nación manchada*, referring to the prejudice that *conversos* were “stained” (*manchados*) through their Jewish origins. In Spanish America, the term *nación* was often used to indicate an ethnolinguistic group as well. However, as Patrick Lesbre highlights, Alva Ixtlilxochitl uses terms like *nación* and *pueblo* rather in the medieval sense meaning “a people.”⁴³ Such a territorial and ethnolinguistic focus is reflected in his interchangeable use of a *nación* with the name of its province or city of origin. It also may explain why the author applies the term to various population groups of pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, including the Mexica, Acolhua, Otomí, and Zapoteca, but also to the “Spanish nation.”⁴⁴

Lesbre has studied in detail the use of *nación* in the Acolhua chronicler’s work, and some of his conclusions provide helpful insights into Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s use of Spanish terms for Nahua organizational units. To start with, he observes that, although the HC’s title prominently features the “*nación chichimeca*,” its complete title only came together in the late nineteenth century under Alfredo Chavero’s editorship, rather reflecting the burgeoning Mexican nationalism of that period. The title is misleading in another way: The Chichimeca are not a group often designated by Alva Ixtlilxochitl as a *nación*. Instead, the term is used mostly in relation to the Toltecs. His frequent references to the *nación tolteca* point once more towards the significance of Toltec culture and descent for the chronicler.⁴⁵ It may also stand in for the Nahua concept of

⁴² María Elena Martínez: *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico*. Stanford, CA 2008, p. 153.

⁴³ Patrick Lesbre: *Le Mexique central à travers le Codex Xolotl et Alva Ixtlilxochitl : entre l’espace préhispanique et l’écriture coloniale*. In: *e-Spania* 14 (2012). Accessed May 15, 2018. <http://e-spania.revues.org/22033 #tocto2n5>.

⁴⁴ Lesbre: *Histoire*.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

toltecatoytl or “Toltecness,” used to designate the sum of all arts and ideals inherited from the Toltecs. In any case, the example makes clear that, for Alva Ixtlilxochitl, *nación* is not necessarily tied to a specific state but rather to a common ethnic belonging, since he continues to apply it to the Toltecs long after they had left their capital city and intermarried with various Chichimeca tribes.⁴⁶

In the HC, the term *patria* is used almost exclusively for the Acolhua capital of Texcoco – surely no coincidence. In a few cases, it is also used for the Toltecs and the Tlaxcaltecs, but more importantly, from Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s perspective, is that his Acolhua homeland (*patria*) is local and by no means national.⁴⁷ Moreover, the only time that the terms *patria* and *nación* are both used in the same passage is in connection with the Acolhua, in a prophecy concerning Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s direct ancestor Ixlilxochilt II. The HC introduces the birth of Ixlilxochilt II in 1500 with various signs, leading the astrologers and fortune tellers to predict that he would become an ally of Cortés and would

“receive new laws and new customs and be a friend of strange people [*naciones*] and an enemy of his fatherland [*patria*] and nation, and that he would go against his own blood; [...] and he would be a real enemy of his gods and religion, his rites and ceremonies.”⁴⁸

The wise men then argue that it is necessary to kill Ixlilxochilt II, the future “traitor.” The newborn’s father, Nezahualpiltzintli, succeeds only with difficulty to dissuade them from the proposed infanticide. This is one of various prophecies in the HC connecting Acolhua rulers to Cortés and the conquest period. On the one hand, signs and predictions played a major role in the Nahuas’ cosmology, where birthdates held specific positive or negative meanings for an individual’s later life, depending on which deity they were connected to.⁴⁹ Many such signs are recorded in books four and five of Sahagún’s *Historia general*. On the other hand, Camilla Townsend and others have argued that such specific predictions of the Spanish conquest go back to early colonial sources, including the writings of Cortés and Sahagún. For native authors, the failure of their

⁴⁶ Ibidem.

⁴⁷ Ibidem.

⁴⁸ Alva Ixtlilxochitl: Obras históricas, Vol. 2, p. 174.

⁴⁹ Hassig: Time, History, and Belief, pp. 36-37.

ancestors to foretell a major event such as the Aztec–Spanish War would have amounted to a serious shortcoming of Nahua cosmology more generally – so the insertion of such prophecies into the writing of history could serve to make the new colonial order more comprehensible to the Nahua.⁵⁰

The passage also showcases Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s use of narrative strategies and intentions, as the prophecy includes some of Ixtlilxochitl II’s deeds that were necessary for proving his descendant’s merits: above all his assistance to the Spaniards and his early conversion to Christianity. The last point is made more explicit when Alva Ixtlilxochitl notes that both his ancestor and the Spanish Emperor Charles V were born in 1500, “and both were central agents in increasing and expanding the holy Catholic faith.”⁵¹ The chronicler used these same arguments to prove his merit in his earlier letters to the Spanish King Philip III, discussed in more detail below.

Essentially, Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s association of the terms *patria* and *nación* with the Acolhua should not be seen as pointing towards modern concepts of the nation but, rather, to the author’s local “*patria chica*.”⁵² The Acolhua chronicler was born and lived in Mexico City. Against this background, the centrality of the Acolhua that is made clear in his *patria–nación* association serves to uphold his connection with the Acolhua, Texcoco, and Ixtlilxochitl II. In other words, while Alva Ixtlilxochitl was not born in and had few real-world connections to Texcoco he sought to make it his *patria chica* by way of his writings.

To conclude, the analysis of key political concepts in Alva Ixtlilxochitl undertaken here confirms once more his identification with and exaltation of the Acolhua of Texcoco. Neither his local identification nor his use of Spanish terms for Nahua concepts was unique to him. This local or “micro-patriotism” connected to the Acolhua points to the continuing importance of Nahua political units,

⁵⁰ Camilla Townsend: Burying the White Gods: New Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico. In: American Historical Review 108, no. 3 (2003), p. 15.

⁵¹ Alva Ixtlilxochitl then goes on to compare the birthdates of Cortés and Martin Luther in 1485 (delaying Luther’s birth by two years), where for him the former spread Catholicism while the latter was its major enemy: Alva Ixtlilxochitl: Historia chichimeca, p. 161. The chronicler’s parallel use of two person’s birthdates is once again reminiscent of the importance of time and dates in Nahua cosmology.

⁵² Lesbre: Histoire. In early modern usage, *patria chica* could refer to the place, village, city, province, or region where a person was born, rather than a larger concept of “nation” or fatherland.

such as the *altepetl*, shining through the European terminology. When dealing with Spanish officials, New Spain's indigenous people would often describe themselves by way of the Spanish *indio* category. But they also, crucially, continued to use highly localized ethnic descriptions on a community level well into the eighteenth century.⁵³

Micro-patriotism itself is, however, far from unique to Mesoamerica. In early modern Spain, the town and city also formed the primary units of identification, defining people's sense of *patria* and belonging. Being perceived as a member of a community was not a fixed status but, rather, a process of identification inherently tied to the exercise of rights. Amerindian populations gradually adopted such notions of *vecindad* (or citizenship) as well.⁵⁴ It is also as part of the Spanish distributive system that the *patria* became central to European and indigenous struggles for rewards and privileges. For creoles – people of European descent born in the Americas – being a descendant of conquerors or early settlers not only shaped their feelings of belonging to the *patria* but also of entitlement to the right to dominion in the viceroyalties. Native elites may have had different feelings of belonging and certainly held a lower position in the colonial hierarchy. Nonetheless, their foci on rights tied to their ancestors and *patrias* clearly echoed the arguments and interests of Spanish-American creoles.⁵⁵

The Nahuas themselves did not distinguish between an *altepetl* in the larger sense and its capital city, a point which can help us to make more sense of Alva Ixtlilxochitl's supposedly chaotic usage of Spanish terms.⁵⁶ He may have been searching for different Spanish terms, including cities, provinces, and empires,

⁵³ Robert Douglas Cope: *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660–1720*. Madison, WI 1994, p. 5.

⁵⁴ Tamar Herzog: *Defining Nations: Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America*, New Haven, CT 2003, pp. 2–11. The translation of *vecindad* as “citizenship” as being distinct from modern citizenships follows Herzog's use of the term.

⁵⁵ José Antonio Mazzotti: *Creole Agencies and the (Post)Colonial Debate in Spanish America*. In: Mabel Moraña, Enrique Dussel, and Carlos A. Jáuregui (eds.): *Coloniality at Large. Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, Durham/London 2008, p. 87, p. 99. See also Nino Vallén's contribution in this volume.

⁵⁶ According to Lockhart sometimes *altepetl* could mean the largest urban settlement and sometimes the whole *altepetl*. Yet in most cases it is nearly impossible to be sure that only the urban part is meant, see Lockhart: *Nahuas*, p. 19.

in order to translate the concept *altepetl*, which had no clear equivalent in European thought. The author's equation of a *nación* with its capital city or its province of origin can also be seen as such an attempt at translating the multiple meanings of *altepetl*. This would fit with Alonso de Molina's translation of *altepetl* as *pueblo*, connecting its quite general meaning of "a people" to the Nahua unit.⁵⁷ While highlighting a particularly Acolhua localism, Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl at the same time conceived of Texcoco as the most significant *altepetl* of the Triple Alliance, as reflected in the Spanish terms surrounding it, including *nación* and *patria*. This strong focus on one capital city and its pre-Hispanic and early colonial elite brings to mind Nahua micro-ethnic identifications, which often increased as a result of colonial political reorganization in New Spain. In this sense, Alva Ixtlilxochitl exemplifies the ways in which Spanish and Nahua traditions of local belonging became merged in New Spain. As he instrumentalized the link to the *patria* in the distributive struggle he was involved in, it is no longer possible to make a clear-cut distinction between native and Spanish understandings of the *patria*.

SAN JUAN TEOTIHUACAN: DESCENT AS STRATEGY

Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl found different ways of extolling his Acolhua forebears in his various chronicles. In another important step in this process, Alva Ixtlilxochitl let his histories be authenticated by the members of the *cabildos de Indios* or city councils of Cuauhtlacinco, Otumba and Texcoco – all part of the Texcoco region – beginning in 1608. Native elders or *tlamatamine* continued to be held in high regard by the Nahua during the colonial period. By including authoritative approvals from outside of Teotihuacan, Alva Ixtlilxochitl could use the elders' positive appraisals of his writings to lend further legitimacy to them and to his ancestors. In order to trace some of his narrative strategies connecting San Juan Teotihuacan and the Acolhua, a comparison between an excerpt from this certification by the native elders with later examples of Alva Ixtlilxochitl's official writings may prove helpful. The passage below is taken from the testimony, as found among the chronicler's writings. It focuses on his

⁵⁷ Alonso de Molina: Diccionario de la lengua náhuatl o mexicana. Ed. Rémi Simeon. Mexico City 1977, Vol. 2, f. 4r. Quoted after Ruhnau: Die politische Organisation, p. 19.

already discussed ancestor, Ixtlilxochitl II, who had participated in the conquest campaigns on the side of Hernán Cortés:

“[T]he services that [the said D. Fernando Cortés Ixtlilxochitl II] did for God and His Majesty the Emperor Our Lord were very great. Firstly, he received with all his love the Catholic faith and the peace of the Captain D. Hernando Cortés and of the other Spaniards that came with him, and he also took part in the conquest against the City of Mexico and the other provinces of this New Spain, [...] fighting against his own uncles and brothers and next of kin, among them the kings and lords of the Mexica and the Tepaneca, [...] and because of this, and because of him being a son and descendant of the kings and lords of the Acolhua, we are giving him [Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl] this endorsement.”⁵⁸

Here, the native elders are summing up major points made by Alva Ixtlilxochitl in his chronicles. These include Ixtlilxochitl II's early conversion to Christianity, fighting against his own kin, and his role in providing large numbers of Acolhua troops to the Spanish cause. We have seen how all these arguments were already used in the HC's prophecy surrounding the birth of Ixtlilxochitl II, which predicts the ruler's ultimate centrality to the conquest. On another level, Alva Ixtlilxochitl's use of this narrative in both his historical writings and the more official certificate highlight the pivotal role of Ixtlilxochitl II for the place of his descendant within the Spanish system. The certificate reveals that the city council members endorse Alva Ixtlilxochitl's writings, not only due to their accuracy but because of his established descent from the Acolhua rulers. The narrative account of Ixtlilxochitl II was central to his descendant Fernando de Alva having his own claims over a native community recognized. As Bradley Benton has discussed, in early colonial times descendants of other Acolhua rulers were *caciques* of Texcoco, with Alva Ixtlilxochitl's familial branch holding little to no influence there. During a short stint as governor of Texcoco, the city's native elite even lobbied successfully for Alva Ixtlilxochitl's removal from the post.⁵⁹ The chronicler's actual lineage and social standing thus collided with the self-image he presented in his writings.

In these examples from the author's writings and from this certification, we can see a “tactical manipulation of memories,” which is typical of *relaciones de*

⁵⁸ Alva Ixtlilxochitl: *Obras históricas*, Vol. 1, p. 464.

⁵⁹ Benton: *Lords of Tetzaco*, pp. 124-130.

méritos and similar Iberian documents according to Robert Folger.⁶⁰ Through this type of text, Spanish and indigenous petitioners modified information in order to bolster their claims before the Spanish Crown, the viceroys, or other authorities. The viceregal legal system was made up of various centers of power, often leading litigants to plead cases before different native and royal officials, which made it possible for litigants to use the competing jurisdictions to their own advantage.⁶¹ What is more, oral accounts by a community's elders had also played a major role in Nahua traditions for legitimizing one's version of history.

In the end, Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl's strategy bore fruit: the chronicler had caught the attention of New Spain's Viceroy Diego Fernández de Córdoba y López de las Roelas with one of his earliest manuscripts, *Compendio histórico del reino de Texcoco*, from ca. 1608.⁶² Consequently, he was appointed by the Viceroy as judge-governor (*juez gobernador*) in various native communities from 1616 onwards and, finally, as translator at the *Juzgado de Indios*. Alva Ixtlilxochitl was awarded this relatively prestigious position following a letter by King Philip III to Viceroy Diego Fernández de Córdoba from May 20, 1620, with which the monarch replied to a letter he had received from Alva Ixtlilxochitl the preceding year.⁶³ Although taking up similar arguments, the native chronicler's letter to King Philip is somewhat more detailed than the earlier certification provided by the native elders as well as the prophecy from the later HC, especially in its description of Ixtlilxochitl II's centrality to the beginnings of Spanish colonization.

According to Alva Ixtlilxochitl in this letter, his ancestor helped to "rebuild and populate [Mexico City] and helped in the same way in the conquest and

⁶⁰ Robert Folger: Alonso Borregán Writes Himself: The Colonial Subject and the Writing of History in *Relaciones de méritos y servicios*. In: Robert Folger and Wulf Oesterreicher (eds.): *Talleres de la memoria – reivindicaciones y autoridad en la historiografía Indiana de los siglos XVI y XVII*. Hamburg/London 2005, p. 268.

⁶¹ Kellogg: *Aztec Society*, p. 5; Regarding these centers of power Kellogg writes: "Under colonial law, Indians could bring their disputes before the Real Audiencia, using it either as a court of first instance or as a court of appeal, or alongside lower-level indigenous authorities." *Ibidem*, p. 7.

⁶² Villella: *Indigenous Elites*, p. 120.

⁶³ For a brief chronology of these events see O'Gorman: *Estudio introductorio*, pp. 23-27.

pacification of all the other provinces of New Spain.”⁶⁴ Moreover, following his very early conversion and Christian marriage, Ixtlilxochitl II “rendered many other great services to God [...] and to [His Majesty] the emperor, for the great benefit of the expansion of [the] holy Catholic faith and religion.”⁶⁵ The obligatory portrayal of the Acolhua ruler’s centrality to the Spanish military efforts and early conversion campaigns is starkly contrasted with his noble descendants’ contemporary fate: in colonial times, the latter “are left in the greatest misery and misfortune, dispossessed of their estates, income and lordships,” all for no clear reason.⁶⁶ This invocation of native people’s current predicaments was based on harsh colonial realities and, subsequently, became a staple argument of law suits involving native nobles and communities.⁶⁷ It also seeks to establish a connection to Spanish judicial precedent, according to which the king assists those that are in need and have not yet benefited from earlier rewards for services rendered, a formulation commonly cited in merit writings. Moreover, the letter’s text can be understood as an abridged version of an earlier account of the Spanish conquest campaigns by the same author, the thirteenth *relación* from his above mentioned *Compendio histórico*.⁶⁸ The letter, however, elegantly sidesteps that text’s more detailed description of Ixtlilxochitl II’s heroic military prowess in lieu of a focus on the central arguments that would likely prove most convincing to Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s royal audience.

The monarch’s reply took up many arguments from this letter, familiar from the native chronicler’s writings and the certification from the elders: The Acolhua rulers are seen as the most ancient leaders of the Triple Alliance, and

⁶⁴ Letra de D. Fernando de Alva y Yxtlilxuchitl al rey, Consejo de Indias (Spain), 1620. AGI, México 138, ramo 1, no. 28, f. 2r.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 2v.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁷ Such a “declinism” would often contrast the contemporary struggles of native people with the relative harmony and wealth under the pre-Hispanic rulers. This narrative was taken up by authors of the religious orders, including Zorita, Motolinia and Durán, who argued for the preservation of traditional hierarchies headed by the “natural lords.” See Villeda: *Indigenous Elites*, pp. 102-106.

⁶⁸ This account is the first of Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s writings to have been translated into English, as Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl: *The Native Conquistador: Alva Ixtlilxochitl’s Account of the Conquest of New Spain*. Ed. Amber Brian, Bradley Benton, and Pablo García Loeza. University Park, PA 2015.

Ixtlilxochitl II is singled out for his conversion to Christianity as well as his substantial assistance in Cortés' campaigns. These key elements made Alva Ixtlilxochitl eligible for further "honorable and qualified offices in accordance with his capacity and merits."⁶⁹ This formulation regarding offices in the king's letter exactly copies the one used in Alva Ixtlilxochitl's letter, a formula common to *relaciones de méritos*. This adoption of an Acolhua bias by the highest Spanish authority, even if only temporary, shows that Alva Ixtlilxochitl had successfully drawn on Iberian literary and judicial conventions. He accomplished this, first, via the legitimization of his writings through native elders – who could build on his advancement of an Acolhua-centric narrative – with such testimonies forming an integral part of medieval and early modern Iberian jurisprudence⁷⁰ and, second, by writing in Spanish and using formulations of the *relaciones de méritos* genre skillfully enough to warrant royal merit.

Members of Alva Ixtlilxochitl's family continued to use the same arguments in their successful efforts to defend their *cacicazgo* of San Juan de Teotihuacan against rival claims until the early nineteenth century. Common to this large number of court cases and petitions was the insistence on the family's legitimate and ancient claim to the *cacicazgo* as well as on the family's descent from the Acolhua's pre-Hispanic elite. While such arguments were common to litigation by native elites and communities, in this case they could build on Alva Ixtlilxochitl's sizeable manuscript archive and previous judicial successes.⁷¹ As mentioned above, Alva Ixtlilxochitl had helped set up a *probanza* for determining the lands of the *cacicazgo* and his family's personal possessions, which set an important precedent when confirmed by the Real Audiencia in 1611. In this

⁶⁹ Real Cedula al Marqués de Guadalcazar, virrey de la Nueva España, recomendándole a D. Fernando de Alva y Yxtlilxochitl, 1621. AGI, Indiferente General 450, libro A6, f. 50r.

⁷⁰ Martínez: Genealogical Fictions, pp. 61-90.

⁷¹ A large number of documents in the Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City (hereafter AGN) attest to both the continuing need to defend the *cacicazgo* and to the lasting influence of Alva Ixtlilxochitl's ideas. For Juan de Alva Cortés describing himself as Alva Ixtlilxochitl's legitimate son, see AGN, Vínculos y mayorazgos 232, ff. 58r-65v, 234, 246r-248v, also in Alva Ixtlilxochitl: Obras históricas, Vol. 2, pp. 373-84. For some of the latest colonial rulings on the succession of the Alva Cortés *cacicazgo* in 1815 and 1808 respectively, see AGN, Vínculos y mayorazgos 233, exp. 2 and exp. 4. For a thorough discussion of the court struggles involving Alva Ixtlilxochitl and his direct descendants, see Amber Brian: Alva Ixtlilxochitl's Native Archive and the Circulation of Knowledge in Colonial Mexico. Nashville, TN 2016, pp. 41-76.

way, the writer and his descendants effectively harked back to the pre-colonial *altepetl* of Texcoco and its rulers in order to keep the contemporary *cacicazgo* of Teotihuacan within the family.

CONCLUSION

The examples I have presented from Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl's life and work reveal various layers of his strategic drawing on pre-Hispanic and Iberian precedents in his writings. His narrative techniques were tied to global processes of colonization, evident in the introduction of Spanish law and administration in New Spain, as well as to more local ways of perceiving the world, including Nahua micro-ethnicities. This coexistence of different worldviews mirrors the manifold ways in which indigenous political concepts, such as the *altepetl*, continued to exert influence throughout colonial times, shaping, in the words of Susan Kellogg, "a colonial Indian culture that, while conditioned by indigenous cultural beliefs and practices in deep and significant ways and marked by important continuities with the pre-Hispanic Era, was nonetheless acculturative and flexible in nature."⁷²

I have focused on both literary and judicial sources tied to Alva Ixtlilxochitl in order to analyze his interconnected strategies for establishing the lineage of his own family and its connection to a specific community. First, his subtle manipulating of native sources from earlier colonial times (especially the *Codex Xolotl*) served to both legitimize his pre-colonial Acolhua-Chichimeca ancestors and to exaggerate the territories they ruled over. Xolotl's huge realm as portrayed in the *Historia de la nación chichimeca* resembles New Spain more than the Chichimecas' actual holdings, thus connecting the pre-Hispanic past to the author's present. This is just one example of how his historical writings attempted to build up the Acolhua of Texcoco as the most ancient and most important member of the Triple Alliance, a theme he took up in his letter to Philip III. Second, Alva Ixtlilxochitl strategically used such arguments in order to extol his more direct Acolhua ancestors – above all Ixtlilxochitl II – before colonial Mexican and royal Spanish authorities. Some of his other main arguments included Ixtlilxochitl II's early conversion and centrality to the military subjugation of the

⁷² Kellogg: *Aztec Society*, p. 217.

Mexica. Alva Ixtlilxochitl then adapted these arguments in terms of length and content, depending on his audiences and their respective backgrounds – be it the native elders, viceroy, or Spanish Crown.

Although this Acolhua chronicler drew on the pre-colonial *altepetl* of Texcoco in his writings, he did so with an eye towards his family's *cacicazgo* of San Juan Teotihuacan in his own time. Under later generations of his family, the *cacicazgo's* lands would continually be sold off, due partly to the increasing influence of non-native groups.⁷³ His family's example is thus suggestive of larger trends that made it more difficult for native elites and communities to hold onto their traditional rights, at least up until judicial transformations of the late seventeenth century.⁷⁴ Despite such losses, consecutive generations relied on Alva Ixtlilxochitl's narrative on the greatness of Acolhua civilization to defend, with varying success, the family's possessions before colonial courts. The same strategic narrative that had directly influenced his appointment to important positions in the colonial administration thus continued to serve the Alva family.

The sources discussed here pose the risk of giving us a skewed picture of the judicial successes of individual native authors such as Alva Ixtlilxochitl, considering how petitions that failed were less likely to be conserved by colonial institutions. Moreover, Alva Ixtlilxochitl was part of a larger group of native authors in New Spain employing a set of specific arguments to secure traditional rights. In this light, while the chronicler's huge corpus and knowledge were certainly exceptional, the strategies he used were less so. Various descendants of Nahua groups highlighted the importance of their respective ancestors' *altepetl*. This continuing importance of the *altepetl* concept was also evident in Alva Ixtlilxochitl's use of various Spanish terms to describe different attributes of the pre-Hispanic Acolhua *altepetl*, which still retained power in colonial native imaginations. Furthermore, such local identifications can be connected to a strengthening in colonial times of pre-colonial Nahua micro-patriotisms, with smaller *calpulli* units gaining more influence than the larger *altepeme* in certain regions. Native communities and nobles thus transported pre-Hispanic concepts

⁷³ On the sale of lands by Alva Ixtlilxochitl's son Juan de Alva Cortés in the late seventeenth century, see for example AGN, Tierras 2886, exp. 5, ff. 31r-38v.

⁷⁴ For more on the effects of the imperial laws of the 1690s (especially the decree of 1697) on native elites see Villella: Indigenous Elites, pp. 241-260; Martínez: Genealogical Fictions, p. 259.

via their deft use of formulations common to the Iberian *relaciones de méritos y servicios*. In this manner, Iberian law made it possible for them to participate in the colonial system by providing contact with the Spanish Crown and its representatives.

Alva Ixtlilxochitl's self-image was intimately bound up with his chosen *patria* of Texcoco for its historical significance and for the legitimacy it seems to have lent to his efforts, despite him having only distant family connections to the city. The apparent ambiguity of his feelings of belonging can be seen as a result of the complex interplay of Iberian and indigenous political ideas evident in merit writings. At the same time, it would be oversimplifying to reduce Alva Ixtlilxochitl's intentions and oeuvre to his fights for personal advancement and family rights. It seems clear that his writings were intended to firmly establish the Acolhua's legitimacy within Mesoamerican history as well as underline the continuing importance of his ancestors' culture and values. Alva Ixtlilxochitl appears to allude to such goals when lamenting the burning of Texcoco's major library during the Spanish conquest or when criticizing Spanish historians' lack of knowledge of native sources.⁷⁵ Expressing such views can be seen as not only strategic ways of showing his own undoubtedly privileged knowledge of both cultures but also as manifesting his concrete fears that, through colonial contact, Acolhua (and Nahuatl) history will be transformed beyond recognition or, worse, lost entirely. Alva Ixtlilxochitl's many chronicles covering variations on the Acolhua's deeds, of their *altepetl* and *tlatoque*, were surely meant to record his ancestors' importance and high level of development. Similar to the work of many other native historians, they also provide a way of remembering a pre-Hispanic past closely shaped by their author's present.

⁷⁵ Alva Ixtlilxochitl: *Obras históricas*, Vol. 2, pp. 18-19.

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JOSE CÁCERES MARDONES

Guaman Poma and the Andean Historicity of Cuzco

HISTORY AND LATIN AMERICA

History arrived in Latin America with the same west wind that permitted Columbus to cross the Atlantic. By the time Columbus launched his enterprise, the humanists had already reexamined the classical authors to discuss and establish the foundations of historical research.¹ The meaning and understanding of history for them was traced back to classical Greek culture as the cradle of Western civilization. What history was and how it should be studied was defined, consequently, in the *agorai*, cloisters and universities of Europe. In the Christian world history that this humanist enterprise produced new room had to be found for Latin America.² Not only did an urgent necessity rise to explain the origins of the indigenous inhabitants of the region the Bible did not mention, but they had to be ordered into the universal Christian order. The latter problem was intrinsically connected to the relationship between history and writing.³ During the early modern period, cultures were classified as historic on the basis of their written culture or as pre-historic due to an absence of recognizable writing.⁴ The developing *ars historica* began to grapple with the hermeneutical difficulties of this differentiation. For example, Tommaso Campanella explained in 1638 that, “You must receive the traditions of the New World from their inhabitants, for they

¹ Anthony Grafton: *Humanist Philologies: Texts, Antiquities, and their Scholarly Transformations in the Early Modern West*. In: Sheldon Pollock, et al. (eds.): *World Philology*. Cambridge, MA 2015, pp. 154-177; Anthony Grafton: *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge 2007.

² Grafton: *What Was History?*, p. 29; Walter Mignolo: *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization*. Ann Harbor 2003, pp. 143-169.

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 125-135.

⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 29-216.

lacked writing.”⁵ As a consequence of such valuations of written history, at the very moment Columbus took possession of Hispaniola, the indigenous peoples’ own history fell into a historical abyss and, ever since, Latin American history has been subordinate to Western history, the region becoming a historiographical and hermeneutical product of Western culture.⁶

The name of G. W. F. Hegel has been mentioned time and again when the “myth of modernity” and its inherent Eurocentrism has been criticized by Latin American scholars.⁷ In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, Hegel indeed announced the manifest inferiority of America and its secondary role in Universal History.⁸ A key upshot of this standpoint was that the future state of the Americas – although Hegel mainly implied North America – was denied in advance any possibility of historical or philosophical reflection from an American perspective and put the Americas in a historically dependent relationship to Europe. It is exactly this “structure of domination and subordination” that has been analyzed via other forms of historical research – in particular by the Indian historian Dipesh Chakrabarty,⁹ whose endeavor to provincialize Europe aims to displace the “hyperreal Europe from the center,”¹⁰ by calling into question the place of “superstitious” practices and polytheism in the presumably rational and secular disci-

⁵ Grafton: *What Was History?*, p. 122. This problem has been brilliantly studied by Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra: *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World*. Stanford 2001.

⁶ Mignolo: *The Darker Side*, pp. 125-169, pp. 171-216.

⁷ See Enrique Dussel: *Eurocentrism and Modernity* (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures). In: Michael Aronna, John Beverley, and José Oviedo (eds.): *The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America*. Durham/London 1995, pp. 65-76; Leopoldo Zea: *Discurso desde la marginación y la barbarie*. Barcelona 1988, pp. 235-236.

⁸ See G. W. F. Hegel: *Lectures on the philosophy of the world history*. Cambridge 1975, pp. 170-171. For the German edition, see G. W. F. Hegel: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*. Werke, Vol. 12. Frankfurt am Main 2017, p. 114. Emphasis added.

⁹ Dipesh Chakrabarty: *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton/Oxford 2000.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

pline of history. These are questions that could easily be raised from a Latin American perspective as well.¹¹

Furthermore, Chakrabarty points towards another aspect of importance: “the problem of temporal heterogeneity.”¹² Based on his analysis of Indian history and his interpretation of Heidegger’s thinking, he offers a new understanding of history as “history in,” which tries to grasp the fragmentation of the past in the present and perceives history as a repetition of *nows*.¹³ Consequently, we could ask ourselves what kind of theory of history can be formulated after we analyze the temporalities of Latin American colonial history. In this fashion, we may contribute towards the pluralism of historical thought.¹⁴

But before reflecting on the philosophy of history, an analysis of colonial historical thought should be put forward, for which I would like to employ Francois Hartog’s heuristic terminology. Starting from Certeau’s observation that “the objectification of the past has made of time the unreflected category of a discipline that never ceases to use it as an instrument of classification,”¹⁵ Hartog suggests the concept of “regimes of historicity,” which define the way a given culture addresses its past, reflects upon it and marks out the modalities of historical consciousness which a culture adopts in the construction and perception of time.¹⁶ Thanks to this notion we are able to grasp “one of the conditions of possibility of historical writing: how, depending on the way relations between the

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 238. For a similar problematization from a Latin American perspective see Aníbal Quijano: *Modernity, Identity, and Utopia in Latin America*. In: Michael Aronna, John Beverley, and José Oviedo (eds.): *The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America*. Durham/London 1995, pp. 65-76; Gonzalo Lamana: *Domination without Dominance: Inca-Spanish Encounters in Early Colonial Peru*. Durham 2008.

¹² Chakrabarty: *Provincializing Europe*, p. 243.

¹³ Ibidem, pp. 249-255.

¹⁴ About the possibilities of the plurality of history see Henning Trüper: *Löwith, Löwith’s Heidegger, and the Unity of History*. In: *History and Theory* 53 (2014), pp. 45-68.

¹⁵ François Hartog: *Regimes of Historicity*. New York 2017, p. 2.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 9.

past, the present and the future are configured, certain types of history are possible and others are not.”¹⁷

The present chapter aims to examine such topics in Guaman Poma de Ayala’s *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (1615/1616).¹⁸ As the title suggests, Guaman Poma proposes a “new” history of the Andean past and an account of the colonial present of his time.¹⁹ His historical writings challenged the European historiographical canon by adopting and transforming it. It is this “hybrid” condition that makes Guaman Poma’s chronicle an excellent case in point to analyze the consequences of colonialism on Andean historicity. Here I investigate the temporalities that structure the work of this Quechua nobleman and his critique of the Spanish colonial administration. What order of time is transported by his chronicle? Does he signal a crisis of time and therefore of its world? Answering these questions should enable us to grasp how time organizes the experience of Guaman Poma de Ayala and how his self-making is connected to the future condition of the indigenous population. In the end, I suggest that Guaman Poma’s proposal for the remaking of the colonial world spring directly from his self-making.

In order to do this, I provide a brief historical and conceptual investigation of coloniality and history in colonial Peru. Afterwards, I approach the order of indigenous time through the concept of *pacha*. Finally, I look at the relationship between Guaman Poma’s chronicle and Andean temporalities through his representation of the city of Cuzco and the dialogue he staged in his writings with the King of Spain.

¹⁷ Hartog: *Regimes of Historicity*, p. 17.

¹⁸ Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*. Ed. Franklin Pease G.Y. Mexico City 2005; Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala: *The First New Chronicle and Good Government*. Ed. David Frye. Indianapolis, IN 2006. For all English quotations, I will indicate the pages in the English translation as well as the pages of the Spanish edition.

¹⁹ Rolena Adorno: *Guaman Poma: Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru*. Austin, TX 2000, pp. 3-12; Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, pp. IX-XXXVIII.

IN SEARCH OF ANDEAN HISTORICITY

The subordination of Latin American history epitomizes the mechanisms of coloniality, which is fundamentally constituted by the creation of colonial difference. Coloniality separates the world into hegemonic and subordinate sides and, accordingly, produces a hierarchization of knowledge between them. The colonial difference allows for and legitimizes the subordination of knowledges and, of course, the subjugation of subordinate peoples.²⁰ An attempt to unveil these colonial mechanisms can be found in Mark Thurner's *History's Peru*. Taking Peru as a case in point, he unmasks the colonial production of historical knowledge and seeks to link it to Peruvian identity.²¹ Thurner asserts that Inca Garcilaso de la Vega empowered the orality and aurality of the Inca when giving an account of Peru's origins. He committed an "intervention of interpretation" in his "Commentaries" (1609), connecting the naming act of Peru to an "Indian" called Beru.²² But the problem does not end there. Thurner goes further by asking how Peruvian history should be identified and concludes that Peru's history "has stood and stands both inside and beyond" European history.²³

Thurner's study attempts to substantiate Edmundo O'Gorman's insightful statement that "things and events in themselves are nothing; their being depends upon the meaning that is ceded to them by the frame of reference of that image of reality that prevails in that moment."²⁴ In fact, we can say that he has properly disclosed the colonial act of naming and has connected it to Andean reality – it is indeed a postcolonial history. But there is a powerful limitation: Thurner's reflections still arise from within the epistemology and hermeneutics that produced

²⁰ Walter D. Mignolo: *Local Histories, Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton 2012, p. 16.

²¹ Mark Thurner: *The Founding Abyss of Colonial History: Or "the Origin and Principle of the Name of Peru."* In: *History and Theory* 48, no. 1 (2009), pp. 44-62.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 59; Thurner: *History's Peru*, pp. 1-26.

²³ Thurner: *History's Peru*, p. 257.

²⁴ Thurner: *The Founding Abyss of Colonial History*, p. 46.

coloniality itself. Hence, I would like to suggest a more radical attempt, not of postcoloniality, but of a decolonization of Peru's history.

A fruitful approach towards decolonization may be possible via adopting the perspective of border thinking, as proposed by Walter Dignolo.²⁵ Border thinking cannot emerge from a universal conceptualization, which could probably be traced to an influential thinker of classical, Enlightenment or present times. It has to emerge from the "local histories" of Latin America – from that exterior border of the modern/colonial world – and produce a subaltern knowledge, a *gnosis*.²⁶ This approach has the epistemological potential to construct a critique of the limitations of universalizing traditions.²⁷ Local histories, as Thurner or Cañizares have shown, have generally been constructed within the bounds of Western epistemology.²⁸ Dignolo indirectly covers this dilemma when he explains that border thinking is a "thinking from dichotomous concepts," which is located at the border of the modern/colonial world.²⁹ In this sense, it will be my goal to try to underline border thinking about history in colonial Peru by means of an analysis of the chronicle of Guaman Poma de Ayala.

The writing of history is not a new topic in historical and cultural studies about colonial Peru, and a vast scholarship exists regarding authors such as Guaman Poma de Ayala and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega or the use of the *kipu* for the telling of history. The difficulty lies in the existing interpretations of colonial written history about the Incas, as Sabine MacCormack suggested, which need to be re-examined to arrive at an indigenous canon about history.³⁰

²⁵ Dignolo: *Local Histories, Global Designs*.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 68. Dignolo's reflections about the construction of time as a colonializing instrument do point in this direction Walter Dignolo: *The Darker Side of Western Modernity. Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham/London 2011, pp. 149-180.

²⁸ Thurner: *History's Peru*; Cañizares-Esguerra: *How to Write the History of the New World*.

²⁹ Dignolo: *Local Histories, Global Designs*, p. 85.

³⁰ Sabine MacCormack: *History, Historical Record, and Ceremonial Action: Incas and Spaniards in Cuzco*. In: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 2 (2001), pp. 329-363.

Two excellent examples of such a revision can be found in the work of Margarita Zamora and Catherine Julien.³¹ Zamora unveils the “discursive demarginalization” of the Andean world undertaken by Inca Garcilaso’s “Commentaries.”³² Garcilaso transforms the oral indigenous narratives into a valid historical source and, in doing so, revisits the Spanish accounts about the Incas and the conquest of Peru. Meanwhile, Julien has identified Inca sources, analyzed their form and content, and proposed an interpretation regarding how they transmitted the Inca past, which she then uses to explain the contradictions of the Spanish accounts.³³ Zamora and Julien have established different forms of historical reflection and recording practiced by the Incas, but they have both done so within the parameters of the European canon of history. In contrast, I would like to start from a possible indigenous conceptualization of time and suggest an interpretation of Andean historical understanding.

PACHAGNOSIS: THROUGH ANDEAN TEMPORALITY

How can we delineate an indigenous gnosis concerning history? Here, I will take the concept of *pacha* as a starting point. The Andean cosmovision understands *pacha* as time and space,³⁴ connecting the static condition of space and the dynamic condition of time on the same level. More generally, *pacha* can be related to different kinds of spaces, to “historical” phases, temporal levels and changes.³⁵ This constellation challenges, primarily, the occidental perception of time,

³¹ Margarita Zamora: *Language, Authority, and Indigenous History in the Comentarios reales de los Incas*. Cambridge 1988; Catherine Julien: *Reading Inca History*. Iowa City 2000.

³² Zamora: *Language, Authority, and Indigenous History*, p. 168.

³³ Julien: *Reading Inca History*, pp. 3-16.

³⁴ Carmen Bernand: *El mundo andino: unidad y particularismos*. In: Carmen Bernand (ed.): *Descubrimiento, conquista y colonización de América a quinientos años*. Mexico City 1994, p. 72; Atuq Manga Qespi: *Pacha: un concepto andino de espacio y tiempo*. In: *Revista Española de Antropología Americana* 24 (1994), pp. 155-189; Thérèse Bouysse-Cassagne and Olivia Harris: *Pacha: En torno al pensamiento aymara*. In: *Tres reflexiones sobre el pensamiento andino*. La Paz 1987.

³⁵ Manga Qespi: *Pacha*, p. 157, pp. 174-185.

because it blends two separate Western notions into one.³⁶ The Andean cosmology, with the notion of *pacha* as its foundation, has usually been connected to a cyclical understanding of history, but, as Manga Qespi has suggested, the structure could be even more complicated. He understands *pacha* as a continuum of loops, which produces different autonomous space-times. Guaman Poma alludes to this plurality of space-times when he narrates that the first Indians had an impression of God when they asked: “*Ticze caylla uira cocha Dios ¿maypim canqui? Hanac pachapicho Uco pachapicho Ticze caylla pachapicho runa camac allpamantallutac cay pacha ymaymanatapas rurac.*”³⁷ Guaman Poma evokes a Christian world in translating the Quechua sentences, because he was, of course, trying to appeal to the Spanish king. Yet, the Quechua text does marvelously outline the indigenous cosmos, as it shows the multi-spatiality that exists in the world, as the following translation by Rodolfo Kusch tries to evoke:

“Viracocha of the Foundation and limit Where are you? In the *ground* above, in this *ground*, in the *ground* within, in the limiting *ground*? Creator of this *ground*, Maker of man, where are you? Listen to me!”³⁸

Commonly, the Andean world is divided into three different spaces: *hanan-pacha*, *kay-pacha*, and *uku-pacha*.³⁹ *Hanan-pacha* is connected to the sacred and creative and is inhabited by *pachayachachic*, the Teacher of the *pacha*.⁴⁰ Opposite to *hanan-pacha* is the *uku-pacha*, the inside ground, the inner world, which is inhabited by Guanacauri, an antagonist force in the indigenous world. The tension between these two worlds resides in the third space, *kay-pacha*, where the past

³⁶ Mignolo: *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*, pp. 157-158.

³⁷ Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, p. 751.

³⁸ Rodolfo Kusch: *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América*. Durham/London 2010, p. 68.

³⁹ Magda von der Heydt-Coca: *When Worlds Collide: The Incorporation of the Andean World into the Emerging World-Economy in the Colonial period*. In: *Dialectical Anthropology* 24, no. 1 (1999), pp. 12-13; Antoinette Molinié Fioravanti: *Tiempo del espacio y espacio del tiempo en los Andes*. In: *Journal de la Société des américanistes* 71 (1985), p. 112.

⁴⁰ See Kusch: *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América*, pp. 52-69.

and the conjectural future are connected and “human life and the universe in its generic spatial and temporal dimension” reside together.⁴¹ In this sense, Kusch calls the *kay-pacha* the “habitat of the here and now” and notes a similarity to Heidegger’s concept of “mere living.”⁴²

The *kay-pacha* sustains itself between two extreme spaces. In this regard, we could see here an analogy between the classical and the Andean world. As Löwith has proposed, the Greeks apprehended the world as the natural law of the cosmos and, accordingly, being and dying was the natural flow of history.⁴³ In the indigenous world of the Andes, these opposing natural states are understood as corresponding to the auspicious and the inauspicious. Although both are seen as a possibility, they are experienced with fear, explicitly with fear of the *pachakuty* – the ending of times. This is the law of the cosmos in the Andean world: the turning of things for better through the *hanan-pacha* or for worse through the *uku-pacha*.⁴⁴ Moreover, *pachakuty* affects the temporality that has been sustained in the *kay-pacha*. As the Italian anthropologist Jose Imbelloni has noted, *pachakuti* were thought to turn time “in the double sense of the loss of the old time and the renewal of the new time.”⁴⁵ In such a situation, humankind can sustain uncertainty through ritual, which allows the *pachakuty* to be avoided and the foundation of existence to be preserved.⁴⁶ In this regard, Rodolfo Kusch has stated that “history is thus mixed with ritual [...] to maintain the deep sense of the *pacha* as habitat of the here and now.”⁴⁷ We need to analyze this claim carefully to grasp the repercussions of the notion of *pacha* for gaining a better understanding of Andean history and historicity.

⁴¹ Kusch: Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América, p. 62.

⁴² Ibidem, p. 68.

⁴³ Löwith: Weltgeschichte und Heilgeschehen, p. 14.

⁴⁴ Bouysse-Cassagne and Harris: Pacha, pp. 35-55.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Kusch: Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América, p. 45.

⁴⁶ Ibidem, p. 63.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 64.

The place of history is the *kay-pacha*. Here, history comes into being through the ritual actions of humankind. Through the enactment of rituals human beings represent their understanding of their living conditions and the possibilities that past and future can unveil in front of them. Whereas Jan Patočka in his *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History* postulates history as the place of human revealing, and Löwith interprets it as the experience of evil and suffering, the Andean world understands history as human acceptance and elusion of suffering.⁴⁸ This “historical” condition is only possible through the dualistic and oxymoronic convolution of past and future in the same locality.

While Chakrabarty considers “fragmentariness” as the main heuristic characteristic for challenging how European philosophy of history has apprehended the past, I would like to suggest that temporal plurality is the central input of an Andean historicity – nothing is historical without being present and future at the same time.⁴⁹ Concurrently, the Andean view of history presents a problem to the critique of historicism and its futurism. The desire for an auspicious future is central to the Andean view. Yet, accepting this means ceasing control over the auspicious output. The Andean vision of history thus offers another subversive and postcolonial possibility for historiography. As a ritual, history is always at the same time a view of the past and a present idea of the future.

CUZCO: AN “OTHER” HISTORICITY

Pacha simultaneously is time and space. In this way, time is not an empty dimension, but becomes reified as space. Guaman Poma’s chronicle, I propose, presents an excellent case in point. Contrary to other indigenous, mestizo or

⁴⁸ I have compared the reflection of Patočka and Löwith – both students of Heidegger – about history with my preliminary account of an Andean gnosis of history, because Rodolfo Kusch, as I have said, has put forward an analogy between Heidegger’s thinking and the Andean cosmivision. Furthermore, Chakrabarty’s project of provincializing Europe follows Heidegger’s remarks so as to understand the historical subject as “an unrealized actual”. See Jan Patočka: *Ketzerische Essays zur Philosophie der Geschichte*. Frankfurt am Main, 2010, pp. 67-72; Löwith: *Weltgeschichte und Heilgeschehen*, p. 204; Chakrabarty: *Provincializing Europe*, pp. 249-250.

⁴⁹ Chakrabarty: *Provincializing Europe*, pp. 249-255.

Spanish historical accounts, Guaman Poma provided a considerable number of drawings, which add a spatial dimension to his chronicle.⁵⁰ The importance of this pictographic space has been considered and profoundly analyzed by Mercedes López-Baralt and Rolena Adorno,⁵¹ who proposes that Guaman Poma's visual code offers a form of "communication more powerful than written language" and is principally influenced by Andean spatial symbolism.⁵² Still, little attention has been paid to the role of Guaman Poma's cityscapes in this Andean symbolic communication.⁵³ In view of a *pacha* notion of knowledge, I argue that the cityscapes do not simply represent a determined space but also a certain temporality. With that in mind, I will now consider the temporal possibilities of Poma's cityscape of Cuzco (Fig. 1).

Richard Kagan sees the prominence of the *plaza* in Guaman Poma's cityscapes as an element corresponding to a "Spanish urban vision;"⁵⁴ yet I take this as another example of the tendency to interpret Guaman Poma from a European perspective. Although Guaman Poma's main rhetorical strategy is indeed utilization of the European canon in order to transmit his message to the Spanish king, in the case of Cuzco it is not so easy to adhere to this idea because of the symbolic meaning of the city. The cosmivision of the Incas put Cuzco at the center of their religious and territorial perceptions. This point is beautifully represented in Guaman Poma's *Mapamundi* of the Indies, where he "creates the fundamental and perfect model of the Andean universe," as Rolena Adorno has put it, with Cuzco

⁵⁰ About Guaman Poma's art, see Rolena Adorno (ed.): *Guaman Poma de Ayala. The Colonial Art of an Andean Author*. New York 1992.

⁵¹ Adorno: *Guaman Poma*, pp. 80-120; Mercedes López-Baralt: *Para decir al Otro: literatura y antropología en nuestra América*. Madrid 2005, pp. 171-181.

⁵² Adorno: *Guaman Poma*, p. 81.

⁵³ Jose Cáceres Mardones: *Guaman Poma's Cuzco and the Colonial Difference*. In: *Documenta Pragensia* 36 (2017), pp. 353-367; Raquel Chang-Rodríguez: *Las ciudades de "Primer nueva coronica" y los mapas de las "Relaciones geográficas de Indias": Un posible vínculo*. In: *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana* 21, no. 41 (Jan. 1995), pp. 95-119.

⁵⁴ Richard L. Kagan: *Urban Images of the Hispanic World, 1493-1793*. New Haven, CT 2000, p. 125.



Fig. 1. Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, Cuzco, 1650 (Royal Library of Denmark, Manuscript Collection, sign. GKS 2232 4º, fol. 1059).

being its center.⁵⁵ In order to underline the importance of this Andean center over “the Spanish order around the square,” Guaman Poma represented on his cityscape of Cuzco both of the original Inca squares, the *Haucay Pata* and *Cuci Pata*. In contrast, Spanish visions of the city usually presented the larger square, the *Haucay Pata* or *Plaza Mayor*. Consequently, if Guaman had really adhered to “the Spanish urban vision” it seems likely that he would have concentrated his representation of the city only around this square.

Unlike Kagan, I would like to propose that Guaman Poma is trying to show an Andean understanding of the city. This point can be further illustrated by looking at the ways in which Poma rearranged some aspects of the real character of the cityscape, such as his movement of the *Coricancha*, the Temple of the Sun, to the side of the *Haucay Pata*.⁵⁶ In reality, the temple was located further from the center and by the time of Guaman Poma the architectural peculiarities of the Incas that he presented could no longer be observed. Furthermore, Guaman Poma similarly arranged other religious and ceremonial buildings around the square in Cuzco’s cityscape, such as the *Huaca Punca*, the Sacred Gate and the *Yllapa Cancha*, the Temple of Thunder, which would not actually have had any place in a “reality-based” detailing of the city. Moreover, these buildings enable us to see the diversity of the ancient Andean religion. Although Guaman Poma knew about and collaborated in the struggle against “idolatry,” he decided to illustrate important religious buildings that were connected to “idolatrous” practices by the Catholic authorities.⁵⁷ Consequently, it can be said that his cityscape did not represent a Christian Cuzco but, rather, an Andean one.

⁵⁵ Adorno: Guaman Poma, p. 92.

⁵⁶ Kagan: *Urban Images of the Hispanic World*, pp. 125-126; Wolfgang W. Wurster: *Dos mundos, una ciudad: El Cuzco, capital de los Incas y ciudad colonial española*. In: Hanns-Albert Steger (ed.): *La concepción de tiempo y espacio en el mundo andino*. Frankfurt am Main 1991, pp. 147-167; Jean-Philippe Husson: *Les villes péruviennes vues par Felipe Waman Puma de Ayala. Un cas particulier: Cuzco*. In: Marie-Cécile Bénassy (ed.): *La ville en Amérique espagnole coloniale*. Paris 1984, pp. 25-46.

⁵⁷ Adorno: Guaman Poma, pp. xlii-xlvi; Lisa Trever: *Idols, Mountains, and Metaphysics in Guaman Poma’s Pictures of Huacas*. In: *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 59/60 (2011), pp. 39-59; Sabine MacCormack: *Gods, Demons, and Idols in the Andes*. In: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 4 (2006), pp. 623-648.

Guama Poma rearranges the components and structure of the city while articulating an Andeanization of its space. From the perspective of the understanding of *pacha* presented above, Guaman Poma also achieves an Andeanization of time and, possibly, of historicity.⁵⁸ Let us not forget that Guaman Poma was actually challenging the existing structures of knowledge when he decided to invert his relation as subject of the king. It is the king, here, who has to be instructed by Guaman Poma who, in so doing, brought the Andean world to the modern world. Guaman Poma's strategy allows us to do the same in relation to historicity. In this vein, I would like to interpret the spatial rearrangement of the *Coricancha* in relation to its "space-time" consequences.

The importance of the Temple of the Sun within the Inca cosmovision lies in the fact that the Sun was the God who originated the Incan dynasty. The Inca himself was called "the Son of the Sun."⁵⁹ This connection between the history of the Incas and the Temple of the Sun is substantiated when we consider that Pachacuti, the ninth king of Cuzco, who was responsible for the formation of the *Tawantinsuyu* (the Kingdom of four regions), exhumed the bodies of their ancestral kings and put them in the Temple of Sun.⁶⁰ The Temple itself is a symbol of the antiquity of Incan history in terms of two different dimensions. On the one hand, the temple serves as a repository of history. Following the Western historiographical conventions of the Renaissance, the temple could be understood as a source of Ancient history. On the other hand, the temple represents a space of the *turn*. Several Incan kings were given the qualifier of *pachakuti*, because their reigns coincided with the turn to a new millennium or with end of a five-hundred-year period.⁶¹ Among them was Inca Pachacuti, the embodiment of the idea of the *turn*. During his reign, one era ended and a new one commenced.⁶² Therefore, the

⁵⁸ Silvia Tieffemberg: Autoría, legitimidad, espacialidad en la obra de Guamán Poma de Ayala. In: Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana 30, no. 60 (2004), p. 218.

⁵⁹ Bernard: El mundo andino, p. 79.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, p. 80.

⁶¹ Kusch: Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América, p. 44.

⁶² Tieffemberg: Autoría, legitimidad, espacialidad, p. 222.

temple offers a connection to the past but announces the possibility of the turn; the temple as space reunites the past and the possible future.

In addition, Guaman Poma decided to represent the building in a simplified, indigenous fashion, wherein architecture and agriculture were entangled, as activities that “give order to the natural world and make it comprehensible according to Andean ways of thinking.”⁶³ Ordering the natural world was not assumed to be putting nature under human power.⁶⁴ Both activities could influence the balance between nature and human beings, leading to the perception of both activities as being ambivalent but necessary.⁶⁵ Temporally speaking, Poma’s rearrangement had a similar function, as it brought a balance between the ancient past and the present to the *kay-pacha*, where both temporal and spatial superposition was considered to take place.

This act of presentification has already been put forth by Rolena Adorno. But, contrary to the notion of the “present in the past” as Adorno has suggested, from the perspective taken here the past collides with the present, thus configuring a new spatio-temporal dimension,⁶⁶ where two different times meet and are shown to coexist. The simultaneity of past and present times, contrary to the Christian linear conception of time, has been identified in *queros*, wooden cups, used in different Incan ceremonies.⁶⁷ But, as we have seen, in the *kay-pacha* the future collides too.

At this point, I would like to follow Silvia Tieffemberg, who has suggested that Guaman Poma announced or hoped for the coming of a *pachakuti*,⁶⁸ the meaning of which is explained when he narrates the life of Inca Pachacuti – precisely the Inca ruler who gave the “historical” connotation to the Temple of the Sun.

⁶³ Carolyn Dean: *The Inka Married the Earth: Integrated Outcrops and the Making of Place*. In: *The Art Bulletin* 89, no. 3 (2007), p. 503.

⁶⁴ Dean: *The Inka Married the Earth*, pp. 505-506.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 508.

⁶⁶ Adorno: *Guaman Poma*, pp. 136-137.

⁶⁷ José Luis Martínez and Paula Martínez: *Narraciones andinas coloniales. Oralidad y visualidad en los Andes*. In: *Journal de la Scoliété des américanistes* 99, no. 2 (2013), pp. 41-81.

⁶⁸ Tieffemberg: *Autoría, legitimidad, espacialidad*.

Guaman Poma describes *pachacuti pacha ticra* (the “world upside down”) as events of miracles and punishments, mostly in the form of natural disasters.⁶⁹ Guaman Poma decided to disarticulate the temporal meaning of *pacha* and attached it only to space, more precisely to the earth, a discursive strategy which could be interpreted from within a Christian biblical perspective. This Christian connotation is not completely detached from spatio-temporal meaning, as for instance the Old Testament flood alludes to a change, to a reversal of creation. But, again, we should not forget that Guaman Poma’s explanation appears to fit the Andean cosmovision perfectly. The turn of *pacha* to the extreme of *uku-pacha* could, within Andean thinking, coherently explain natural catastrophes, but the inclusion of terminology related to holy miracles and godly punishments would appear to veil the Andean denotation of Guaman Poma’s description.⁷⁰

In spite of Guaman Poma’s consideration of *pachakuti*, the only connection to it in Cuzco’s cityscape is the above-mentioned significance of the Temple of the Sun. Such a relationship would suggest a consciousness of the possibility of change. In that case, his representation of Cuzco can be seen as showing the indigenous connection of the past within the present and only suggesting a turn to the future, without signaling a determined future. Additionally, we could suggest that the representation is rather a kind of ceremonial drawing, a form of discursive ritual seeking to stabilize the *pacha*, the foundation of the living. Rodolfo Kusch has suggested Manco Capac – the founder of Inca civilization – be seen as the *gnosis* of the Inca world – a symbolic figure of the center who consecrated the *pacha* through ritual. Similarly, Guaman Poma highlights in a similar vein a symbolic figure of the center – the city of Cuzco and, more particularly, the Temple of the Sun – and offers a stabilizing act via his representation itself.

Nevertheless, the thesis of the announcement of a *pachakuti* can be supported by Guaman Poma’s depiction of Cuzco. I would like to support this possibility with the simple fact that he *drew* a new Cuzco which not only resembled the colonial present but, at the same time, remembered the Andean past. Drawing or

⁶⁹ Guaman Poma de Ayala: The First New Chronicle, p. 41; Guaman Poma de Ayala: Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno, p. 76.

⁷⁰ Kusch: Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América, pp. 56-57.

painting was not a simple task in Andean society, as the creative act of drawing was intrinsically connected to the power to outline a projected reality – an action that was only attributed to Inca rulers.⁷¹ By drawing their cities and their buildings, an Inca ruler “not only demonstrated his creative power, but also created the world over which he would rule, by the activity of modeling and drawing things that were to come into existence.”⁷² Through the act of drawing, Guaman Poma ascribed to himself – let us not forget that Guaman Poma was trying to prove his royal origins – the capacity of futurization of a new state of things. On that account, his visual depiction, which transforms itself from a consecrated ritual into the announcement of a *pachakuti*, is an intercession between past and future: the present disappears and transforms itself in change. From this perspective, the possible futurization of history is a subversive appropriation and invention undertaken by Guaman Poma de Ayala. He submits his account of the history of the Incas and colonial Peru to a Christian understanding of history which, as we have seen, is attached to a determined idea of the future. Guaman Poma separates himself from his indigenous temporal experience and proposes a historical narrative that waits and hopes for a desirable future. His inventive strategy relies on the future he sketched – an indigenous, auspicious future. As a historian, Guaman Poma asks the questions that have been vexing both classical and modern historians alike: How did we get here? How should things continue from here?⁷³

THE SPANISH PAST AND GUAMAN POMA’S FUTURE

In his representation of Cusco, Guaman Poma not only incorporates these questions on a symbolic level. Rather, we could claim that his entire chronicle is an effort to provide answers to these questions. His historiographical exercise is not *just* a chronicle that narrates past events from a present perspective. On the one hand, the chronicler narrates the present, too, as he not only describes the current state of affairs in the viceroyalty of Peru but also accounts for his present

⁷¹ MacCormack: History, Historical Record, and Ceremonial Action.

⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 333.

⁷³ Löwith: Weltgeschichte und Heilgeschehen, p. 28.

actions in the chapter “Camina el autor.” On the other hand, Guaman Poma outlines, for the King himself, future possibilities for the colonial society. Therefore, we should consider the definition of his “new chronicle” not only as a novel narration of the colonial past but also as an original form that is consistent with the Andean understanding of historicity.

This temporal configuration of the chronicle allows Guaman Poma to answer the questions highlighted earlier. As several studies about Guaman’s chronicle have exposed, his response to the question of how the kingdom of Peru got in the situation it found itself at the beginning of the seventeenth century is intrinsically connected to his critique of the colonial administration,⁷⁴ at the core of which lies a genealogy of Spanish greed that aligns with his narration of the conquest of Peru.⁷⁵ Already in his synoptic account of Almagro’s and Pizarro’s departure to Peru, Guaman Poma explains that “the greed for the gold and silver of the Indies caused tumult throughout Castile.”⁷⁶ Greed accompanied the conquest and the beginnings of the colonial government, as “out of greed, many priests and Spaniards and ladies and merchants embarked to Peru.”⁷⁷ The result was the complete change of existing structures and living conditions of the native community. The repercussions for the times Guaman Poma lived in were so disastrous that he describes the state of things as a world upside down:⁷⁸

“The world was lost as well: the same things occurred among the Spaniards. Greengrocers, peddlers, tailor, shoemakers, pastry cooks, and bakers were calling themselves Don and Doña. Jews and Moors now use the title of Don: *the world is upside down. The judges do nothing to remedy this*, because they have been paid off.

⁷⁴ See Adorno: Guaman Poma, pp. 140-144, Lamana: Domination Without Dominance, p. 161; Tieffemberg: Autoría, legitimidad, espacialidad, pp. 220-221.

⁷⁵ See for example, Guaman Poma de Ayala: Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno, pp. 41, 57, 281, 284, 287, 291, 295, 304, 306.

⁷⁶ Guaman Poma de Ayala: The First New Chronicle, p. 19; Guaman Poma de Ayala: Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno, p. 41.

⁷⁷ Guaman Poma de Ayala: The First New Chronicle, p. 118; Guaman Poma de Ayala: Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno, p. 302

⁷⁸ See Adorno: Guaman Poma, 93, 106; Tieffemberg: Autoría, legitimidad, espacialidad, p. 221.

Priests and padres call themselves doctor, licentiates, bachelor, and masters, even though they have earned no titles, have no rights, and know no letters. Some people make crude jokes, mocking them with the name *licenciasnos*. That is to say: *the world is upside down. Justice, however, ought to deal justly and issue punishments.*⁷⁹

Guaman Poma presents a *pachacuti*, which turned the world upside down. But what were the consequences of the avarice of the Spanish conquistadores and future administrators and at what kind of justice, to which Guaman Poma appeals in his description, should be aimed?

The consequences were twofold and were connected to each other. Firstly, blinded by their own greed, the Spaniards sinned against the same Christian values that they were trying to bring to the indigenous population. Guaman Poma summarizes this negligent social behavior of the Spaniards in the chapter “Considerations”, where he imitates a typical genre of ascetic literature to preach about the social consequences of Spanish greed and allude to their moral consequences for the Spaniards.⁸⁰ In his first consideration, he addresses the Spaniards as “Christians” and reminds them of their “harm and evil doing.” Finally, he describes them as “proud and self-serving.”⁸¹ In addition, when Guaman Poma explains the Christian understanding of the world – in which heaven and hell exist – he thus reminds the Spaniards about the possible consequences of their behavior. Through their unchristian actions, the Spaniards acted mostly against Andean society, as a result changing its economic and demographic situation.⁸² In addition, by way of the *encomienda* system, they seized the possessions of the Inca

⁷⁹ Guaman Poma de Ayala: *The First New Chronicle*, p.135; Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, p. 314. Emphasis added.

⁸⁰ See Rolena Adorno: *Las otras fuentes de Guaman Poma: sus lecturas castellanas*. In: *Histórica 2* (1978), pp. 146-148.

⁸¹ Guaman Poma de Ayala: *The First New Chronicle*, p. 289; Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, p. 750.

⁸² As example, see Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, pp. 475-488. Regarding the sexualization of the visual critique, see López-Baralt: *Para decir al Otro*, pp. 191-206.

state and its subjects.⁸³ This ruinous panorama sits at the center of the conversation between Guaman Poma and the King, who summarizes exactly what Guaman Poma had been narrating to him:

“Tell me, author Ayala. You have told me many rueful stories and described how the Indians are coming to an end: they are suffering troubles and cannot multiply because people come in and steal their wives, daughters, and their property in houses and land, utterly skinning them.”⁸⁴

The metaphor of the “world upside down” describes, on the one hand, the arrival of the Spaniards as well as their greed as a means of answering the question of how the indigenous people got in their worsened situation. On the other hand, the metaphor is completed with the description of the effects of their arrival: The world of the indigenous values, indigenous property, and society disappeared with the coming of the Spaniards and their unchristian behavior. The justice that Guaman Poma calls for several times should seek to address this situation by answering the question of how the situation should continue.

The answer to our second question unfolds during the aforementioned dialogue between the King and Guaman Poma. Guaman Poma clearly states the goal of this dialogue being “the increase and welfare of Indians of this kingdom.”⁸⁵ When the King asks why the native population was so numerous before the arrival of the Spaniards, Guaman Poma refers to the centrality of the “laws and commandments of the Incas.”⁸⁶ He tries to elucidate for the King that it is in the capacity of the indigenous community to have forms of self-government or political participation, because they know how to follow laws and regulations. The problem is that, despite the existing colonial hierarchy, everyone was pursuing their own interests instead of following that hierarchical order – in which the King was at

⁸³ See Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, pp. 437-448.

⁸⁴ Guaman Poma de Ayala: *The First New Chronicle*, p. 340; Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, p. 799.

⁸⁵ Guaman Poma de Ayala: *The First New Chronicle*, p. 333; Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, p. 793.

⁸⁶ Guaman Poma de Ayala: *The First New Chronicle*, p. 335; Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, p. 794.

the top. In this regard, Guaman Poma explains that the natives peacefully served only one king and, although there were so many different chiefs and lords, every one of them lived in accord with the law and mandates of the Incas.⁸⁷ Of course, the power of this political plea should not be exaggerated, as Guaman Poma is still addressing the King from the position of a vassal. But I would like to suggest that he is at least trying to emphasize what he called “Indian expertise” (“habilidad de indio”) as a form of practical rationality for understanding and acting upon one’s possibilities and surroundings.⁸⁸

It should be remembered that Guaman Poma stressed the good qualities of native governance for the colonial administration. Meanwhile, the Viceroy, Francisco de Toledo (1515–1582), was represented negatively because of his creation of the *reducciones* and the execution of Tupac Amaru (1545–1572), and his only illustrious action, which contributed to the prosperity of indigenous individuals, was an ordinance taken from the “ancient Indians, the Wari Wiracocha Runa, the Wari Runa, the Purim Runa, and the Auca Pacha Runa, and the Inca runan.”⁸⁹

Moreover, acknowledgment of good native government shows up in Guaman Poma’s discussion about the second topic of the dialogue: the search for indigenous prosperity. His advice deals with property and rewards. With regard to property, he advises giving the native population individual and communal farms where they would work in agriculture and keeping livestock.⁹⁰ More importantly, Guaman Poma does not seek a redistribution of wealth but, rather, a re-appropriation of what had once been owned by indigenous people. Guaman Poma explains that the Spaniards should give back everything that they had gained by force and pay for everything they had wrongfully enjoyed.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Guaman Poma de Ayala: Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno, p. 794.

⁸⁸ Ibidem, p. 58

⁸⁹ Guaman Poma de Ayala: The First New Chronicle, p. 151; Guaman Poma de Ayala: Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno, p. 343

⁹⁰ See Guaman Poma de Ayala: Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno, pp. 794-795, 800.

⁹¹ Ibidem, p. 799

Guaman Poma reinforces his plea for indigenous property by means of a legal theodicy. In one of his “considerations” he explains that the whole world belongs to God – as Castile to the Castilians, and the Indies to the *yndios* – and that it was God who put them in their corresponding places. Guaman Poma concludes that native people were the “legitimate” and “natural” owners of the lands of Peru,⁹² emphasizing the indigenization of property when he stipulates that the Spaniards were foreign, “in the language of the Indians, *mitmac Castellamanta samoc*.”⁹³ Here, Guaman Poma recurs to the Quechua language to once again reinforce his Andean plea. It is in his description of Cuzco where Guaman Poma reminds the reader that this was the part of the world where it would always be spoken: “*Hamoy Ynga, hamoy auqui, hamoy coya, hamuy nusta, hamoy palla*.”⁹⁴

Aside from the indigenous appropriation of property, Guaman Poma is also interested in developing new practices towards the indigenous population. On the subject of the mines, he suggests a new arrangement of resting time after a determinate period of working in them.⁹⁵ Every province should be free of work for six months. Furthermore, he describes how the natives had been discouraged to help in the discovery of new mines because of Spanish abuse,⁹⁶ for which he recommends that the natives should be recompensed after their discoveries. Overall, Guaman Poma stresses that Spanish behavior towards the natives had to change and that they should be recognized as rightful vassals of the King.

The proposed restoration of property along with the reassertion of indigenous qualities would serve as the starting point for native society to correctly serve God and King.⁹⁷ This is where Guaman Poma shines: He heavily criticizes the behavior of the King’s vassals and demands a substantial rearrangement of colonial

⁹² Guaman Poma de Ayala: Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno, p. 755.

⁹³ “Foreign who came from Castile”, Guaman Poma de Ayala: The First New Chronicle, p. 294; Guaman Poma de Ayala: Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno, p. 755.

⁹⁴ “Come Inca, come prince, come queen, come princess, come madam”, Guaman Poma de Ayala: Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno, p. 858.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 797.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 755.

society and a redistribution of the state, but he does not challenge the authority of the King. In a contentious tone, and as if the message was not clear enough, Guaman Poma directly addresses King Philip III in one of his most striking passages:

“Without the Indians, Your majesty is worth nothing, because remember, Castile is Castile because of the Indians. His Serenity the emperor-king, may God keep him in heaven, was powerful because of the Indians of this kingdom. Your Majesty’s father was also a monarch of great power and renowned strength because of the Indians of this kingdom. The same is true of Your Majesty.”⁹⁸

How should things continue within the viceroyalty of Peru? Not as they were with the Spaniards, but as they were during the Inca state. Not through vigilance and punishment of the Spaniards, but through the autonomy and recognition of the native inhabitants. This is the future proposed by Guaman Poma de Ayala.

The humble counsel of Guaman Poma de Ayala is not entirely selfless, however. On the contrary, the information and guidance he provides for the King are based on his own life and being. He is the embodiment of the present, from which the past and the future can be observed and interpreted. In the section “Camina el autor,” he explains to the King how he has come back from the world, the world turned upside down, to see his home “fallen to the ground” and his family “naked.”⁹⁹ Guaman Poma’s experience is evidence of the past and the present but, at the same time, of possibilities of the future. In the same chapter, he recalls a conversation with a Spaniard to whom he explained that, despite the injustice he had suffered, he would not seek legal action but rather inform his Majesty and help him to “relieve his royal conscience.”¹⁰⁰ When the Spanish man argued that Guaman Poma should go the King because he would surely obtain a

⁹⁸ Guaman Poma de Ayala: *The First New Chronicle*, pp. 338-339; Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, p. 797.

⁹⁹ Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, p. 888

¹⁰⁰ Guaman Poma de Ayala: *The First New Chronicle*, p. 356; Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, p. 895. In the dialogue between Guaman Poma and the King, he suggested the same goal, see p. 810.

“*merced*,” he respectfully replied: “Señor, I am an old man of eighty years. I cannot remedy that. May God remedy it, and His Majesty: he can; it is in his hands.”¹⁰¹ In fact, it is exactly because of this condition of poverty that Guaman Poma can speak with the King. Almost at the end of his chronicle he puts himself in the middle of everything.¹⁰² His proposal for the remaking of the upside down world springs directly from his self-making.¹⁰³ He asks rhetorically: Who could write and talk to such highest Majesty? He then answers:

“He did dare, as the vassal of his royal crown and as his gentleman in this kingdom of the Indies of the New World; that is, as a prince of this kingdom, a grandson of the tenth king, Topa Inca Yupanqui, and a legitimate son of Doña Juana Curi Ocllo, Coya of Peru.

Therefore, he had to write and labor over this New Chronicle and Good Government of this Kingdom, in service to God and His Majesty and for the well-being, increase, conservation and multiplication of the Indians of this Kingdom.”¹⁰⁴

The view of the future world Guaman Poma offers to the King is a result of his own life: poor, native to the Indies, to Peru. He is the epitome of the “Indians.”

Guaman Poma changes the genre of the chronicle so as to add to it temporal plurality, coexisting in the space of the present. In this fashion, Guaman Poma accordingly represents the *reality-in-which-he-lives*.¹⁰⁵ This rearrangement is evident in the ways Guaman Poma reflects on time and space through his narration and drawings, as seen in the cityscape of Cuzco. In spite of Spanish colonization, the Inca past still lives on in the colonial present. At the same time, his chronicle reflects a process of changing subjectivities that are turning into a new conception

¹⁰¹ Guaman Poma de Ayala: *The First New Chronicle*, p. 357; Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, p. 896.

¹⁰² Guaman Poma had already completed, sewed, and paginated the manuscript and he pasted these pages in it. See Rolena Adorno: *A Witness unto Itself: The Integrity of the Autograph Manuscript of Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno (1615/1616)*. In: *Fund og Forskning* 41 (2002), pp. 7-106.

¹⁰³ Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, p. 907.

¹⁰⁴ Guaman Poma de Ayala: *The First New Chronicle*, p. 359; Guaman Poma de Ayala: *Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*, p. 908.

¹⁰⁵ Kusch: *Indigenous and Popular Thinking in América*, p. 48.

of the world. We cannot argue that Guaman Poma intended to achieve a complete “Andeanization” of the colonial society, as he still appeals to the Spanish king, and we cannot ignore the Christian elements of his challenging proposal. Paul Ricoeur understands the historical condition as human beings presenting themselves “as a being in history.”¹⁰⁶ Guaman Poma presents himself and the indigenous population as being in two histories: one Andean, the other Christian. The former occurs in the interconnected present of the *pacha*, and the latter is separated from the present looking towards the future, to salvation. Guaman Poma presents a historiographic project defined by the Andean past and how the encounter with the Christian world view has affected it. In this way, the past is remembered from an Andean perspective but utilized for an eschatological idea of the future. The framework of this temporal plurality is still the *pacha*, the *here and now*.

As a consequence, Andean historicity would mean that the space of history is produced through the *pachakuti* and that history should be reckoned and be explained through the interconnection of past, present and future.¹⁰⁷ Guaman Poma narrates and structures his chronicle in this fashion, by adopting an eschatological aspiration that was intended to lead towards a just colonial society, according to an Andean cosmovision.

¹⁰⁶ Paul Ricoeur: *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Chicago 2004, p. xvi.

¹⁰⁷ This interconnection of time has also been similarly articulated by Rolena Adorno, but the interaction between the different times follows a historicist teleological development. See Adorno: *Guaman Poma*, p. 33.

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NINO VALLEN

**The Self and the World in Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza's
*Sumaria relación de las cosas de la Nueva España***

At the turn of the seventeenth century, prelates of the Franciscan Order caused a scandal in Mexico City. Shortly after notice had arrived from Europe that the Order was making it harder for American-born novices to be admitted, New Spanish ecclesiastical leaders petitioned the monarch to send a hundred friars from Spain.¹ Residents of the viceroyalty's capital responded angrily to these developments, claiming that the prelates ignored them "because of the mistrust they harbor for those that are born in the land [New Spain, that is]."² Frustration further increased after the arrival of a new viceroy at the end of 1603. During this moment of political upheaval, stories began to circulate that the same prelates were composing a report for the Spanish Crown, demonstrating that Spaniards born in the Indies were "naturally insufficient and incapable of governing."³ These rumors prompted outcries from the city council, the cathedral chapter, the university, as well as almost all of Mexico City's convents and religious colleges. Complaining about the falsehoods that were being spread, representatives of these institutions asked the incoming and outgoing viceroys to produce alternative reports "in favor of the nature and sufficiency of the creoles, so as to qualify for His Majesty and the Council their talents for any sort of dignitary position or office."⁴

One of those who addressed the new viceroy in the wake of this scandal was Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza. Born in Atzalán (in today's state of Veracruz) halfway into the sixteenth century, this mid-ranking official felt personally affected by the ongoing discussions. For decades, he had been making a living gaining

¹ Carta del Conde de Monterrey sobre el gobierno eclesiástico. 30 de abril de 1604. In: Lewis Hanke: *Los Virreyes españoles en America durante el Gobierno de la casa de Austria*, México. Madrid 1977, Vol. 2: 224.

² *Ibidem*, p. 225.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 226

⁴ *Ibidem*.

the favor of a succession of viceroys, who provided him with offices and administrative duties. His chances of being successful with the newly arrived Viceroy, Juan de Mendoza y Luna, the Marquis of Montesclaros, might have been affected if the latter believed that American-born Spaniards were incapable of fulfilling authoritative functions. Yet, Dorantes also saw in the scandal an opportunity, as it allowed him to render to Montesclaros the service of instructing him about a region of which this royal official possessed little knowledge. For this purpose, in 1604 he wrote a text that is known today as the *Sumaria relación de las cosas de la Nueva España*, consisting of historical and natural historical descriptions of the Indies, New Spain, and Mexico City. Additionally, it provides a “catalogue and discourse”⁵ of the *conquistadores* and *pobladores* (settlers) of New Spain, meant to assist Montesclaros with his most vexed responsibility: the distribution of royal grace and favor.

Historians and literary scholars have long considered the *Sumaria relación* to be a vehicle for Dorantes’ social advancement. Ernesto de la Torre described it as the only clearly discernable objective in a work that, in his view, lacked any “pre-conceived plan” or originality.⁶ In his introduction to a reedited edition, the Mexican historian characterizes Dorantes’ text as a chaotic patchwork of fragments copied from the writings of Bartolomé de las Casas, Francisco López de Gómara, Diego Durán, Francisco de Terrazas, and Mateo Rosas de Quendo with which the author sought to distract readers of the work’s actual goal of acquiring benefits. At the same time, De la Torre, along with many other scholars, have found in the *Sumaria relación* traces of the insolence, vanity, and dissatisfaction of the descendants of the *conquistadores* and settlers, resulting in a text that represents “with perfection the spirit of New Spanish creoles.”⁷

More recent studies of the *Sumaria relación* have further explored these two distinct dimensions of the text. David Solodkow, for example, has considered Dorantes’ rhetoric and ideological strategies through the lens of an emerging

⁵ Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza, *Sumaria relación de las cosas de la Nueva España: con noticia individual de los conquistadores y primeros pobladores españoles*. Ed. Ernesto de la Torre Villar. Mexico City 1987, pp. 95-96.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. xxx.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. ix. Compare, for example, Aurora Diéz-Canedo: *Los desventurados barrocos: Sentimiento y reflexión entre los descendientes de los conquistadores: Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza, Juan Suárez Peralta y Gonzalo Gómez de Cervantes*. Mexico City 1990.

creole self-consciousness.⁸ According to Solodkow, the insertion of rumors, a fragmented historical memory, and an imperfect use of existing registers and writings speak to the capacity of the creole population to negotiate with the imperial center, seeking to reappropriate and transform the metropolitan culture. Robert Folger, in turn, has analyzed *Sumaria relación* as a *memorial* produced in a strategic attempt to intervene in the colonial “economy of *mercedes*.” He analyzes the text as an authoritative map of this political economy that predetermines “the choice of *beneméritos* through the authorities.”⁹ Underpinning its chaotic welding of disparate genres and text pieces, according to Folger, is a logic of tactical writing meant to entertain, outline a “topography of potential *mercedes*,” and fashion an image of the author as a high-ranking bureaucrat and advisor.¹⁰

The present chapter examines how, in his efforts to fashion himself as a deserving subject, Dorantes de Carranza explored his alliances with various collectives – including the indigenous population, American-born Spaniards, *conquistadores*, and settlers – while also delineating the factors that distinguished him from them. I argue that this process of identification and differentiation followed a logic that was defined by several related conceptions of how society’s benefits were to be distributed in a just manner. Dorantes believed that, in order to ensure that each received what he was due, the Spanish Crown should reward those who had served the monarch or had inherited their merit by way of the law. Yet, at the same time, the monarch and his representatives should also, via Dorantes’ text, be able to properly assess the true nature of the people residing in New Spain, in order to determine what roles they were suitable for. To grasp the significance of this logic of assessment, the chapter first explores how early modern understandings of personhood came to play a role in discussions about the distributive process. Subsequently, I analyze how Dorantes de Carranza sought to demonstrate in different spheres of being why he more than others was worthy of the viceregal

⁸ David M. Solodkow: La aristocracia de los desposeídos: Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza y la primera generación de criollos novohispanos. In: Juan M. Vitulli and David M. Solodkow (eds.): Poéticas de lo criollo: la transformación del concepto “criollo” en las letras hispano-americanas (siglo XVI al XIX). Buenos Aires 2009, p. 141.

⁹ Robert Folger: Writing as Poaching: Interpellation and Self-Fashioning in Colonial relaciones de méritos y servicios. Leiden/Boston 2011, p. 69

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 84.

society's benefits. Through such an exploration of the *Sumaria relación*, the chapter seeks to deepen our understanding of the multi-layered notions of a deserving self that contemporaries fashioned for themselves in distributive struggles as well as the ways in which this shaped their visions of the world.

PERSONHOOD AND THE MULTIPLE SPHERES OF BEING

Personhood in the early modern era was inherently relational. Early modern Europeans believed that people became the way they were as a result of their embeddedness in the material world, their familial and social ambiances, and cosmic or divine life.¹¹ These existential circles preceded the individual person, who was subjected to forces working from the outside on his or her body and soul. Yet the outside also became manifest inside the individual: in his or her complexion,¹² natural inclinations, as well as customs and manners. As such, these existential spheres did not merely surround the individual but they were, in fact, what a person was. For instance, a child born and raised in a noble family reflected in his or her virtues, intelligence, and physical appearance the nobility of the lineage. The same was true for the communities in which one came into the world or in which one resided. As the Spanish jurist and historian Francisco Bermúdez de Pedraza wrote in 1608, people “resemble to a certain extent the place in which they were born.”¹³

These ideas about personhood were grounded in a medicinal and natural philosophical framework harking back to classical antiquity. Specialists and laypersons argued along with authorities such as Hippocrates and Galen that the human body was composed of four elements (earth, water, air, fire), four humors (blood, yellow bile, phlegm, black bile), and four temperaments (sanguine, choleric,

¹¹ Timothy J. Reiss: *Mirages of the Self: Patterns of Personhood in Ancient and Early Modern Europe*. Stanford 2003, p. 2.

¹² The term complexion had a wide range of meanings in early modern society. It could signify a mixture of qualities and predominant humor; it also designated an individual's permanent disposition or temperament determined by a governing humor; and it involved physical characteristics reflecting this natural condition as well. Compare: Valentin Groebner: *Complexio/Complexion: Categorizing Individual Natures, 1250–1600*. In: Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal (eds.): *The Moral Authority of Nature*. Chicago 2004, pp. 361–383.

¹³ Francisco Bermúdez de Pedraza: *Antigüedad y excelencias de Granada*. Madrid 1608, f. 46.

phlegmatic, melancholic).¹⁴ Qualitative mixtures of the opposite primary qualities (hot or cold, dry or moist) reigning within the human body determined how these bodily fluids were balanced. A particular composition of these qualities designated a person's behavior, inclinations, and moral stature, as well as his or her appearance or particular physiognomic traits. Although each mixture of these qualities constituted an innate natural condition, their exact composition fluctuated constantly during the course of a person's life. It was commonly accepted that in a constantly moving cosmos a natural body is not only passing through a natural cycle of generation and fading away but subjected, too, to ongoing processes of alteration caused by new elements being generated out of one another.¹⁵

Various natural factors were responsible for producing such motion in the human body. From the moment of conception, parents transmitted their qualities to their child first through the semen that created new life and then through the milk that sustained it.¹⁶ As sublimations of the parental blood, both fluids played a key role in shaping aspects of the child's physiology, as well as moral and psychological traits. Equally important to these processes of the generation of the human body was the environment to which it was exposed. Albertus Magnus explained this role, characterizing place as "an active principle of generation in the manner of a father."¹⁷ Just as the father's qualities were transmitted through semen, climatological, solar, and astral vectors shaped the mixture of qualities in the fetus. Ideas about the generative power of place explained the differences between human beings, as every individual was shaped by qualities that were unique to one particular place. At the same, these ideas also made intelligible why the natural bodies in one region or municipality shared certain properties.¹⁸ Subjected to the same air, solar light and heat, as well as the heavenly bodies

¹⁴ Rebecca Earle: *The Body of the Conquistador: Food, Race and the Colonial Experience in Spanish America, 1492–1700*. Cambridge 2012, pp. 26–28.

¹⁵ To explain such ideas, contemporaries often referred to Aristotle's *On Generation and Corruption*. For example, Dorantes de Carranza: *Sumaria relación*, p. 22.

¹⁶ María Elena Martínez: *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico*. Stanford 2008, pp. 47–48.

¹⁷ Nicolás Wey Gómez: *The Tropics of Empire: Why Columbus Sailed South to the Indies*. Cambridge, MA/London 2008, p. 250.

¹⁸ Juan Huarte de San Juan: *Examen de ingenios para las ciencias*. Ed. Ildefonso Martínez y Fernández. Madrid 1846 [1575], pp. 35–36.

appearing on the horizon, all the people in a particular place developed a similar composition of qualities, which was reflected in their appearance and behavior. Alterations in the qualities of such natural vectors, for instance as a result of the changing of the seasons or a person moving from one place to another, impacted the sum quality of qualities, which could result in imbalances in a person's health or changes in his or her complexion.¹⁹

Still, natural factors alone did not produce all fluctuations in the human body and soul. Behavioral regimes external to the human body also affected the composition of its qualities. Early modern physicians considered the six so-called non-naturals – control over the air, exercise, sleeping, consumption, excretion, and passions – to be practices that had a profound impact on human health and character.²⁰ They sought to treat illnesses by subjecting persons to other climes, by changing their exercise regimes, or by adding or removing comestibles possessing qualities that were opposite to the ones prevailing in an individual's diet. Inherently personal, such behavioral regimes played an important role in the ways in which a person shaped his or her own character and appearance. Indeed, an idea that was prevalent in the medical and political language of the time held that moderate behavior in each of these areas contributed to the shaping of a virtuous complexion, attesting to a person's nobility both on the inside and outside. At the same time, just as with place, a common behavioral regime also considered to explain why members of a certain group shared certain physical characteristics or behavioral inclinations.

Throughout the Iberian world, these ideas about personhood acquired great significance for conflicts over the distribution of society's benefits, privileges, and honors. Distributive struggles fueled interest in classical cosmographical and medicinal theories and contributed to their introduction into Iberian political languages. Fueling this development was the so-called *sapiential* tradition, which introduced a new distributive rationale based on the application of knowledge about human nature.²¹ Already during the Middle Ages, clergymen, legal special-

¹⁹ Earle: *The Body of the Conquistador*, pp. 168-170.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 26-30.

²¹ Concerning the influence of the *sapiential* tradition on late medieval Spanish political and judicial culture, see: Hugo Oscar Bizzarri: *Las colecciones sapienciales castellanas en el proceso de reafirmación del poder monárquico (siglos XII y XIV)*. In: *Cahiers de linguistique hispanique médiévale* 20 (1995), pp. 35-73.

ists, and political theorists began to argue that, in order to determine whether a person was suitable for a certain position in society, the king had to carefully assess the candidate's inner nature. Particularly influential in the diffusion of this doctrine was the highly popular ninth-century *Kitab sirr al-asrâr* (*Secret of secrets*). An Arabic pseudoaristotelian treatise on statecraft, this text explained how to render legible a person's character and inclinations with the help of his complexion, astrological nativity, or manners.²²

By the sixteenth century, Spanish authors had produced elaborate theories around this logic of assessment, upon which treatises on nobility, the figure of the counselor, and numerous other offices all drew. Almost without exception, these texts address the question of what properties a person needed to possess to qualify for a privileged position or duty.²³ Such characteristics appear in these treatises as qualities of the body and soul, as specific types of complexion, or as the behavioral inclinations that followed from them. Exemplary here is Marco Antonio de Camós y Requeséns' discussion about the ideal counselor in his *Microcosmia y gobierno universal del hombre cristiano* (Barcelona, 1592). Camós states that, ideally, a person who counseled the king should possess a choleric and sanguine complexion, because such persons "are ingenious, have a good memory, speak well and have clear judgment, they are friends of fairness, conscientious of the common good, lovingly, affable, magnanimous, and, above all, loyal."²⁴ Another issue such texts laid out to their readers was how to recognize desired characteristics in a person, explaining how virtue and nobility could be discerned in a person's lineage, his or her coat of arms, as well as in the moderation or excellence of his or her customs and manners. In some cases, instructions also appear regard-

²² Pseudo-Aristóteles: *Secreto de los secretos, poridat de las poridades: Versiones castellanas del Pseudo-Aristóteles Secretum Secretorum*. Ed. Hugo O. Bizzarri. Valencia 2010, pp. 91-94, pp. 139-57.

²³ In his *Norte de príncipes* (Paris, 1605), Antonio Perez, King Philip II's former secretary of state, explains for example how it was a prince's duty to know: "los ingenios, y las calidades, y las inclinaciones de los hombres, y con esto la calidad de los oficios, y personas gobernadas, y á cada uno le emplease en aquello para que era bueno, que con esto cumpliria su inclinacion, y deseos naturales, y serviria á su Principe, y ayudaria á su Republica." Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Indiferente virreinal, Caja 0427, exp. 1, image 73.

²⁴ Marco Antonio de Camós: *Microcosmia, y gobierno universal del hombre christiano*, para todos los estados y qualquiera de ellos. Barcelona 1592, p. 138.

ing how to spot signs of impurity of blood, when for instance a person possesses the facial features of a Jew or Moor.²⁵

An even more important question occupying these authors was why persons possessing a specific set of characteristics deserved certain privileges or honors more than others. Although authors sought to resolve this issue mostly through legal and political theory, ideas about personhood played an important role in their considerations as well. Illustrative here are the heated discussions on the nature of nobility that centered on the question whether this quality was something innate or a reward granted by the community in return for virtuous behavior.²⁶ Conservative members of the nobility argued that nature, through the family's lineage and blood, determined a person's true nobility and status in society.²⁷ Any attempt to disregard this innate nature and to pose a role that was not truly one's own was doomed to fail. On the opposite side of this debate, members of the upper middle classes, merchants, and untitled *hidalgos* argued that one's social position was not determined solely by birth.²⁸ They contended that one could rise above one's own nature or even change it through hard work, self-knowledge, learning, and the rendering of virtuous deeds. In their view, such acts, rather than blood, ought to determine who deserved the king's grace and favor.

Beginning in the late fifteenth century, discussions about the worthiness of certain groups or individuals also acquired a specific spatial dimension. This was the result of an interpretation of the *sapiential* doctrine, which held that the king should know all the subjects in his realm in order to recruit persons whose natures would fit their responsibilities.²⁹ With the expansion of cosmographical and

²⁵ For a discussion of the spotting of conversos, see also Christina H. Lee: *The Anxiety of Sameness in Early Modern Spain*. Manchester 2016, pp. 101-118.

²⁶ For a discussion of these debates, see José A. Guillén Berrendero: *La edad de la nobleza: identidad nobiliaria en Castilla y Portugal (1556-1621)*. Madrid 2012.

²⁷ José Julio Martín Romero: *El "Nobiliario vero" de Ferrán Mexía y el pensamiento aristocrático del siglo XV*. Madrid 2019.

²⁸ Many authors based this idea on a treatise written by Mosén Diego de Valera in 1441, entitled *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*. This text is published in Mario D. Penna (ed.): *Biblioteca de autores españoles: prosistas castellanos del siglo XV*. Madrid 1959, Vol. 1: pp. 89-113, especially p. 93.

²⁹ In the thirteenth-century *Libro de los doze sabios* it was already written, for instance, that the king should know "Qué personas buenas hay en cada ciudad o villa o lugar, y cómo usan, y cuáles son para guerra o cuáles son para oficios, o cuáles codiciosos desordenados, o cuáles

geographical knowledge in Iberian societies, in their distributive struggles people started using moral theories explaining why people in distinct places in the world differed from each other. At times, such ideas were used explicitly in conflicts between two communities over specific privileges. For instance, Gines Rocamora y Torrano explained that the sky above Burgos “produces excellent minds,” giving this city, rather than Toledo, the right to vote first in the Cortes.³⁰ Most of the time, however, such praise was meant to influence the reputations of collectives and their individual members, showing some inherent aspect of a shared nature through descriptions of the environment, the greatness of a municipality’s buildings, and the achievements of its residents.³¹

The use of these different ideas about the nature of human beings in distributive struggles had a direct impact on the growing consciousness of having an individual self. Through theoretical and fictional literature, contemporaries became aware of the reasons explaining why a person possessed certain attributes that distinguished him or her from others. Moreover, contemporaries’ theoretical reflections provided them with ideas on how to actively influence the ways in which individuals were or how others perceived them. Such knowledge enabled the development of new strategies for the fashioning of a deserving self. Depending on the contexts in which they moved, subjects of the Spanish Crown sought to ensure that the assessments made of different aspects of what defined them as a person turned out to be positive. In his *Sumaria relación*, Dorantes de Carraza follows this logic as he seeks to present himself as a subject worthy of Viceroy Montesclaros’ grace and favor. By assessing the spheres that define his nature and by distinguishing himself from those groups with which he shares certain qualities and virtues, he fashions his own picture of a deserving self.

templados, porque a cada uno dé y ordene lo que entendiere que le cumple, y así no hará cosa desordenada ni sin razón.” John K. Walsh: *El libro de los doze sabios o Tractado de la nobleza y lealtad* (ca. 1237): estudio y edición. Madrid 1975, pp. 87-88.

³⁰ Gines Rocamora y Torrano: *Sphera del universo*. Madrid 1599, f. 143v.

³¹ For an introduction into the chorographic genre, see Richard L. Kagan: *Urban Images of the Hispanic World, 1493–1793*. New Haven/London 2000.

BEING BORN IN THE INDIES

One of the spheres that acquired acute importance at the time Dorantes was writing *Sumaria relación* was the American continent itself. During previous decades, royal authorities and clergymen had begun to observe that Spaniards born in the Indies differed from those born in the Iberian Peninsula, noting changes in the nature of the former, as their bodies and souls adapted to the dispositions of the new territories.³² Observations such as these often appeared in the context of critical remarks about the behavior of these so-called *criollos*. In the first draft of his *Geografía y descripción universal de las Indias* (1574), Juan López de Velasco referred for example to such alterations to explain why “slander and unrest” were so common in the Indies.³³ According to the royal chronicler-cosmographer, creoles were, even when they did not intermingle with the natives, becoming more like the Indians as a result of the influences of the heavenly skies. As so many “restless and lost spirits had moved to these provinces,” they lacked the capacity to resist the inclinations that the nature of America inspired in them.³⁴ Notably, this passage never made it past the royal censorship, as the censors worried that expressing such a differentiation among Spaniards could produce unrest in the Indies, a preoccupation proven justified by the events in Mexico City at the turn of the seventeenth century.

A combination of circumstances seems to have caused the emotional responses of the city’s population to the developments that were taking place within the Franciscan Order. For decades, competition within the viceroyalty over a limited number of offices and benefits had been intensifying, and the religious orders presented an important career opportunity for the younger sons of local families.³⁵ If the Franciscan Order decided to limit the number of places for novices born in

³² For a more detailed introduction to the problem of the degeneration of the creole population, see Ralph Bauer and José A. Mazzotti: Introduction. In: Ralph Bauer and José A. Mazzotti (eds.): *Creole Subjects in the Colonial Americas: Empires, Texts, Identities*. Chapel Hill 2009, pp. 1-7.

³³ Juan López de Velasco: *Geografía y descripción universal de las Indias*. Ed. Justo Zaragoza. Madrid 1894, pp. 37-38.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

³⁵ Mark A. Burkholder: *Spaniards in the Colonial Empire: Creoles vs. Peninsulars?* Malden, MA 2013, pp. 28-43.

New Spain, this would likely have significant consequences for at least some of them. Still, the fact that internal developments in one religious order were seen as a threat to social and political opportunities for all residents of Mexico City was probably the result of two other factors. On the one hand, a change of viceroy implied changes in existing networks of patronage as well, which put many actors in viceregal society on edge. On the other hand, it is likely that by this time it was becoming clear that at the Spanish court it was no longer taboo to distinguish between peninsulars and creoles. Clear proof of this change is the *Interrogatorio* that the Council of the Indies dispatched to all American territories in 1604, containing a question about the number of persons belonging to each group.³⁶ For those born in New Spain, the apparent acceptance of the category *criollo* by the Spanish Crown could have been seen as having the indirect consequence that negative assessments of the creoles' qualities could actually affect their chances of obtaining favors at the court.

Requests that viceroys received from creoles to produce alternative reports underlining their adequacy for office bear witness to the role that the above-described doctrine of assessment came to play in this particular distributive struggle. Due to this regime of assessment, creoles considered it essential to generate valuations of their inner nature in order to present a positive picture of their qualities and capacities. Although viceroys refused to assist in the production of these reports, worried as they were to further an undesirable rift among Spanish subjects of the Crown, some efforts were nonetheless made to address the problem.³⁷ Enrico Martínez did so, for example, in his *Repertorio de tiempo e historia natural de Nueva España* (Mexico, 1606). In this cosmographic treatise, the German polymath considered the impact of the heavenly bodies on American-born Spaniards. Establishing a fundamental distinction between the complexion of the Indians and the creoles, he contended that both responded in distinct ways to these astral influences. As the creoles' choleric inheritance in Mexico had turned sanguine under the benign influence of the sun, they were actually more

³⁶ Francisco de Solano (ed.): *Cuestionarios para la formación de las Relaciones geográficas de Indias*. Madrid 1988, pp. 97-111, esp. question 102.

³⁷ The outgoing viceroy, the Count of Monterrey, advised the monarch and the Council of the Indies to discard these reports in case they did make it to the court in Spain and to demonstrate at all times their unconditioned confidence in the creoles and their talents. *Carta del Conde de Monterrey sobre el gobierno eclesiástico*. April 30, 1604. In: Hanke: *Los Virreyes españoles en America*, Vol. 2, p. 227.

intelligent than their Spanish parents, even when they were physically weaker than them.³⁸

Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza took a different approach to this question about the adequacy of the American-born Spaniards in the *Sumaria relación*. In contrast to Martínez, Dorantes does not distinguish Indians from creoles. Instead, he establishes an analogy between them, based on their common place of birth – their shared status of *naturales*, that is.³⁹ Dorantes first uses this analogy in his efforts to demonstrate that, in spite of common complaints about floods and diseases, Mexico City was actually blessed with a benign nature.⁴⁰ Relying on fragments from Diego Durán’s *Historia de las Indias* (1587) and Bartolomé de las Casas’ *Apologética historia sumaria* (1554), he links the greatness of the pre-Hispanic city to the cosmic and natural benevolence that positively affected the people residing in this place. To this end, he recounts how the Mexica arrived in the Valley of Mexico, where they received a divine promise that after their long peregrination they would find rest and prosperity on the island situated in Lake Texcoco. According to Dorantes, this prophesy did indeed come true. By the time the Spaniards arrived in Tenochtitlan in 1519, the small island settlement had developed into a metropolis comprising 50,000 households in which “three, four, and up to ten citizens lived, in a way that there were 200,000, and one million persons in total.”⁴¹

This population density was, in the first place, a sign of the land’s fertility. Yet, with the help of Las Casas, Dorantes explains that the people’s fecundity was also a result of them eating and drinking modestly. In addition to considering this custom a sign of the natural qualities reigning in this place, Dorantes also presents these consumption patterns as a factor shaping the virtuous complexion that contributed to the success of the inhabitants of Mexico-Tenochtitlan in becoming the center of an empire that extended “from one sea to the other and that possessed

³⁸ For more detailed discussion Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra: *New World, New Stars: Patriotic Astrology and the Invention of Indian and Creole Bodies in Colonial Spanish America, 1600–1650*. In: *American Historical Review* 104, no. 1 (1999), pp. 62-64.

³⁹ Fernando Benítez also stresses this intimate relationship between the creole and the Indian, which he links to an “American consciousness.” Benítez: *Los criollos*, pp. 256-257.

⁴⁰ Dorantes de Carranza: *Sumaria relación*, pp. 14-23.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

such great riches.”⁴² Divine favor, fertility, and the temperateness of the land, as reflected in the behavior of its inhabitants, were all factors that explained the Mexica’s cultural development and their imperial achievements. Such a celebration of the city’s pre-Hispanic past undoubtedly played a role in demonstrating the greatness of the feats of those who had conquered this empire.⁴³ But the fertility of the natives, their moderate customs, as well as their nobility also point towards more general conditions affecting all natural bodies in this place. Dorantes’ assessment of these qualities enables him to counter ideas about the degenerative effects of the environment on the current residents of Mexico City, whose nature it shaped.

Dorantes’ strategic use of an analogy between two groups of naturales is also helpful for understanding the significance of a puzzling intermezzo in the *Sumaria relación*. At one point in the text, Dorantes shifts attention away from New Spain and towards Christopher Columbus’ discovery of the Indies.⁴⁴ He explains this sudden turn by pointing out the significance of Columbus’ feats and the fact that some of his descendants were still living in Mexico City.⁴⁵ In practice, however, Dorantes mainly uses this excursion to the Caribbean to include Las Casas’ reflections on the American nature and its natural inhabitants. A great admirer of the *Apologética historia sumaria*, Dorantes seems to have discovered in this defense of the intellectual capacities of the Indian population the answers to the questions with which he and his contemporaries were grappling.⁴⁶ The Protector of the Indians had written his work in response to Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda’s claim that Indians were “barbarians,” who were “deficient in reason, whether because of the region of the heavens, which makes them weak [...]; or because of some evil custom, which makes men almost like beasts.”⁴⁷ Seeking to reverse Sepúlveda’s arguments, Las Casas considered on the one hand the criteria through which people’s intelligence could be assessed and, on the other, provided a careful

⁴² Dorantes de Carranza: *Sumaria relación*, p. 23.

⁴³ Compare Jorge L. Terukina Yamauchi: *El imperio de la virtud: Grandeza mexicana (1604) de Bernardo de Balbuena y el discurso criollo novohispano*. Woodridge 2017, p. 145.

⁴⁴ Dorantes de Carranza: *Sumaria relación*, pp. 43-51.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

⁴⁶ Dorantes writes that he valued the book so much that he “diera por él no sólo dinero pero la sangre de mis brazos.” *Ibidem*, p. 221.

⁴⁷ Cited in Wey Gómez: *The Tropics of Empire*, p. 105.

assessment of a wide-ranging variety of elements in which the benevolent qualities of the American nature became visible.⁴⁸

Dorantes copies extensively from Las Casas' writings, starting with his assessment of Hispaniola. The friar compared the Caribbean island to three of the most famous and celebrated islands of ancient times: England, Sicily, and Crete. Through this comparison, the *Apologetica* sought to posit the primacy of Hispaniola in terms of its position in the world, its fertility, the temperateness of its climes, its healthiness, and the benevolent nature of the winds and heavens affecting all living beings there.⁴⁹ This celebration of the island acts as a bridge to Las Casas' praise of the adjoining islands and the American continent as a whole. As these lands were all positioned under the same skies, many parts of the Indies were supposed to have equally beneficial factors contributing to their temperateness, prosperity, and healthiness. Las Casas argued, in fact, that these lands belong to *India extra gangum*: the land positioned west of the Ganges River.⁵⁰ Not only were the Spanish Indies as abundant in gold, silver, copper, pearls, precious stones, and spices as India, but it was also just as fertile and inhabited by an equally large variety of peoples. Yet, while the people residing in India were considered to be almost as black as many Africans, Amerindians were thought to be neither entirely black nor white but, instead, had a skin color resembling that of saffron. This leads Las Casas, and Dorantes with him, to arrive at the conclusion that "from the color of these peoples the temperateness of this orb can be gathered, and from the temperateness itself their color and also their customs and reasons."⁵¹

Various aspects of the bodies that have been shaped by and make up the American sphere of being were, thus, used to learn about the qualities of the other. This in itself is an important element of Dorantes' tactical attempts to refute negative assessments of the American nature. But he takes a further step in this process by adding the universal rules on human intelligence that Las Casas

⁴⁸ The full title of this work attests to these objectives: *Apologetica historia sumaria: quanto a las cualidades, dispusición, descripción, cielo y suelo destas tierras, y condiciones naturales, policías, repúblicas manera de vivir e costumbres de las gentes destas Indias Occidentales y meridionales cuyo imperio soberano pertenece a los reyes de Castilla (1551-1554).*

⁴⁹ Dorantes de Carranza: *Sumaria relación*, pp. 60-61.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 62.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 65.

provides. Building on authoritative works by Aristotle, Ptolemy, Albertus Magnus, and many others, the *Apologética* considers the natural causes that shape a human being's reasoning capacities: namely, the heavens, the qualities of a region, the composition of an individual's body parts and organs, the clemency and gentleness of the climes, the ages of the persons involved, and the nature of one's nutrition.⁵²

Dorantes first follows Las Casas in showing that the influence of the heavenly bodies, climes, and nutrition in Hispaniola and in the Indies in general contributed positively to the development of the reasoning skills of its natural population. He then continues using the same logic of assessment for New Spain and its current inhabitants. Again, he describes the beneficial influences that the heavenly bodies exercise on the viceroyalty as well as the flora and fauna and medicinal plants, which he characterizes as "friends of the health and complexion of man."⁵³ That such circumstances also resulted in people developing excellent reasoning capacities is underlined by his pondering on Mexico's institutions, including its university and many churches, monasteries, hospitals, convents. Reflecting on most of the factors that, according to Las Casas, should be assessed when determining the reasoning capacities of the Indians – that is, natural disposition and abilities, types of governance, customs, and religion – Dorantes assesses the qualities of the creoles, showing their worthiness for authoritative functions.

This shifting between the local, the regional, and the universal plays an important role in Dorantes' attempt to refute ideas about the creoles lacking intelligence. The analogies and global comparisons that Las Casas made for his defense of the Indians are extended via a new analogy to the creole population. As *naturales* and products of the American hemisphere, the Indians serve as models to assess the qualities of the heavenly bodies, climes, and winds that also work on the bodies and souls of these other *naturales*, the creoles. By mimicking and crudely appropriating Las Casas' work, Dorantes managed to demonstrate, as Robert Folger has noted, his knowledge of "a learned discourse he would not have been able to master himself."⁵⁴ He thus added authoritative value to his panegyric descriptions of his patria, giving his assessment of its benevolent qualities a more

⁵² Ibidem, pp. 65-66.

⁵³ Ibidem, p. 107.

⁵⁴ Folger: Writing as Poaching, p. 76.

erudite nature. Ultimately, he seems to fulfil the objective of making clear that, because of its place in the world, the Americas produce people that, in comparison to those of other nations, were no less intelligent or capable of fulfilling administrative responsibilities. As such, he highlights not only the worthiness of members of this group but also underlines a key dimension of his deserving self.

A GENEALOGY OF NEW WORLD *BENEMÉRITOS*

Although discussion about assessing the creoles' qualities acquired a sudden urgency at the turn of the seventeenth century, this was not the most significant problem of the time in the process of distributing royal grace and favor. From the era of the conquest, distributive struggles in New Spain had evolved around the question of who the first *conquistadores* and *pobladores* were and how they should be ordered within a hierarchy of merit.⁵⁵ The urgency of these questions had significantly increased after the promulgation of the New Laws in 1542, which not only changed the future of the *encomienda* system but also the role of these two categories in distributive processes.

In an effort to maintain its control over the distribution of royal grace and favor, the Spanish Crown included two promises in these controversial laws that essentially turned the labels *conquistador* and *poblador* into a quasi-quality, similar in function though not in dignity to the *hidalgo*. First, they affirmed that in the distribution of *corregimientos* and other benefits "first conquistadores," followed by "married settlers," should be preferred over other candidates.⁵⁶ Second, they stated that the "sons of the first *conquistadores*" who did not possess an *encomienda* and were born from legitimate marriages were to be assessed and rewarded "as their fathers would have been if they still had been alive."⁵⁷ Laying the legal foundation for the establishment of lineages of *beneméritos*, the New Laws provided a new incentive to confirm one's status as a *conquistador* or *poblador*, while also extending dramatically the number of persons entitled to

⁵⁵ Marvyn Helen Bacigalupo: *A Changing Perspective. Attitudes Towards Creole Society in New Spain (1521–1610)*. London 1981, pp. 96-97.

⁵⁶ For a recent reproduction of these laws, see Thomas Gomez: *Droit de conquête et droits des Indiens*, Paris 2014, pp. 192-210.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 207.

remuneration. Both developments fueled struggles over the identification and hierarchization of the members of these groups.

For Dorantes, the New Laws and the justice they promised to the descendants of the *conquistadores* and first settlers were of great importance. He was clearly aware of the role that these laws played in the diminishing importance of the *encomienda* system, a development he laments but considers to be at the same time irreversible.⁵⁸ A more emotional response from Dorantes to these laws was prompted by the ways in which the rights of these descendants were being violated. Pointing out the poverty and hunger these men were suffering, he lodges bitter complaints about the Crown neglecting its promise to nurture them.⁵⁹ Dorantes' anger, and that of many of his contemporaries, was fueled by the perceived successes of the persons who were new to the land.⁶⁰ "Oh Indies!" he exclaims for instance,

"Mother to strangers, shelter of villains and delinquents, common patria of the unnatural, sweet kiss of peace to the newly arrived, flattery of those who value themselves, abundance of the hungry, cloth with which you cover the naked. Oh Indies! Stepmother of your children and exile of your natives (*naturales*)."⁶¹

In contrast to his earlier celebration of the relationship between the Indies and its creole inhabitants, here Dorantes stresses the unnatural character of what was occurring to this supposedly privileged group of naturals. With the New Laws being neglected, the *advenezidos* impoverished the land and left those legally entitled to its wealth without anything to eat.⁶²

Dorantes ties his complaints about the role of these newcomers to a general reflection on the challenges with which the Spanish viceroys were confronted when they sought to distribute the few benefits they had at their disposal. Using extensive fragments from Francisco de Terraza's now-lost epic poem *Nuevo*

⁵⁸ Dorantes de Carranza: Sumaria relación, pp. 222-223.

⁵⁹ Ibidem, p. 203.

⁶⁰ The relationship between the creoles and the newcomers from the Spanish Peninsula has been extensively studied, see for example Bacigalupo: A Changing Perspective, pp. 109-120. See also the contribution by Stefan Rinke in this volume.

⁶¹ Dorantes de Carranza: Sumaria relación, p. 105

⁶² Ibidem, p. 135.

Mundo y conquista, he warns Viceroy Montesclaros of the imposters who will appear before him. Some of these applicants for benefits came from Europe, carrying letters written by famous noblemen and talking about the services they had rendered in Italy.⁶³ Others were residents of the viceroyalty, pretending to be sons and grandsons of the *conquistadores*, even if they did not actually belong to these lineages or the main family branch or were actually of illegitimate birth. Interference with the just distribution of royal grace and favor in the viceroyalty was, thus, a result not only of newcomers arriving to there but also of the viceroys' unfamiliarity with who rightfully and unequivocally deserved the land's benefits and offices.

As he seeks to reassure Viceroy Montesclaros of the dignity of the *conquistadores* and settlers and their descendants, Dorantes first reminds him of the reasons that had inspired the Crown's promises in the New Laws. With the help of episodic descriptions of the conquest of Mexico-Tenochtitlan and other provinces in New Spain, he contends that the *conquistadores* had rendered such great services that the monarch had deemed it necessary to extend recognition of their merit to subsequent generations. "Even though among the *conquistadores* there were but few hidalgos," he writes, "now they are all presumed to be, because the nobility of their nature and their crop had its origins in the deeds and service rendered to the king."⁶⁴ Shifting attention away from Hernán Cortés, whom he blames for being greedy and failing to defend the interests of his companions, he tries to save from oblivion the other persons who had been involved in the conquest.⁶⁵ He mentions by name all thirteen captains in Cortés' army, the eleven captains that commanded the expedition's ships, the 24 captains involved in the conquest of the other provinces in Central America, and even the eleven women that accompanied the conquistadores.⁶⁶ Ultimately, he includes in his text a catalogue of the 191 houses of those men who, according to Dorantes, should be recognized as true conquistadores.

⁶³ Ibidem, p. 137.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, p. 23.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, pp. 32-33, p. 37. On Dorantes' critique of Cortés, see also Terukina Yamauchi: *El imperio de la virtud*, pp. 109-111.

⁶⁶ Dorantes de Carranza: *Sumaria relación*, p. 28.

Each of the entries in this register describes what services the lineage's primogenitor owed his quality as conquistador to and who were or claimed to be his legitimate sons, sons-in-law, grandsons, and great grandsons. It is also observed who of these descendants already possessed Indians and whom should be excluded from receiving any favors because of their illegitimate birth. By producing this list, Dorantes followed a well-established practice that he himself traces back to the times of Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza (1535–49).⁶⁷ From 1542, such lists were produced as royal officials and inhabitants of the viceroyalty sought to keep in check the number of claimants or include themselves among the *bene-méritos*.⁶⁸ The latter objective appears to have moved Dorantes to include his register, which may have been a response to another memorial listing the *conquistadores* of New Spain that Montesclaros received when he took office.⁶⁹

The list that was discovered among the viceroy's papers differs considerably, however, from the one Dorantes presented. Not only do the names appearing in both registers differ, but Dorantes also includes in his an additional list of 77 houses of *pobladores*. Although efforts to identify the settlers had been made before,⁷⁰ the identification of the *conquistadores* had often been given priority as they preceded the settlers in the hierarchy of merit. Dorantes sought to change this situation by convincing Montesclaros' of the worthiness of the members of this group as well. Being the son of Andrés Dorantes de Carranza, one the four famous survivors of Pánfilo de Narvaez's expedition to Florida in 1526, he had little other choice. His father had built up considerable social status, mostly due to the favors

⁶⁷ Dorantes de Carranza: Sumaria relación, p. 96. The first of these registers is preserved in the Escorial and has been published by Mariano González-Leal as *Relación secreta de conquistadores: informes del archivo personal del emperador Carlos I, que se conserva en la biblioteca del Escorial, años 1539-1542*. Guanajuato 1979. An updated version from the end of the 1540s can be found in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville (hereafter AGI), México, 1064, L.1. The register has been published by Francisco A. de Icaza: *Conquistadores y pobladores de Nueva España: diccionario autobiográfico*. 2 vols. Madrid 1923.

⁶⁸ *Conquistadores* Gonzalo Cerezo and Andrés de Tapia produced for instance an alphabetic list containing the names of 209 *conquistadores*. Reproduced in Francisco Paso y Troncoso: *Epistolario de Nueva España, 1505-1818*. Mexico City 1940, Vol. XIV, pp. 148-155.

⁶⁹ This memorial is printed as "Memorial de los conquistadores de esta Nueva España, que se hallaron en la toma de México, y fueron después a ganar y conquistar con el marqués del Valle las provincias de Tututepeque y provincial de Guatemala, Honduras e Hibueras, que fue toda la Nueva España" in Dorantes de Carranza, pp. 373–391.

⁷⁰ Mendoza had done so in his register. Icaza: *Conquistadores y pobladores*.

bestowed upon him by Viceroy Mendoza, but it was publicly known that he had not actually been a *conquistador* involved in the conquest of land.⁷¹

To make sure that – in spite of his lower position within the hierarchy of the meritorious – he was still considered for an office, Dorantes sought to blur the distinction between these two groups of *beneméritos*. Presenting himself as the advocate (*procurador general*) of this “nobility of *conquistadores* and *pobladores*,”⁷² he hints at their principal equality by arguing that the settlers’ role in populating the land ought to be valued in the same manner as the military services of the *conquistadores*. In order, it seems, to demonstrate the Crown’s position on the matter, he emphasizes that the New Laws order that members of both groups “should be provided and given the same favor.”⁷³ To further blur the traditional hierarchy, Dorantes also emphasizes how difficult it had become to separate members of the two groups after decades of intermarriage. Dorantes shows these kinship bonds in his register, linking descendants of the *pobladores* to *conquistador* lineages.⁷⁴

At the same time, Dorantes seeks to justify that the *pobladores*, and certainly his own family, deserved such benefits more than the *conquistadores*. Throughout the *Sumaria relación*, he criticizes the damage the conquerors had wrought in the Indies. Men like Cortés and Pedro de Alvarado are denounced for their greed and the excessive violence they used against the Indians.⁷⁵ These excesses throw shade on the greatness of the conquerors’ achievements and, according to Dorantes, they are one of the reasons for the poverty of their descendants, who are doing penitence for their ancestors’ vices.⁷⁶ It is surely not without meaning when he stresses that, in the selection of the 77 houses of *pobladores*, “I only find

⁷¹ In the *Información de sus méritos y calidad* that Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza presented to the Audiencia of Mexico on November 5, 1573, Andrés was described only as a citizen (*vecino*) of Mexico. Información recibida en la Real Audiencia de México sobre Baltazar Dorantes de Carranza. México, 5 de noviembre de 1573, AGI, México, 212, N. 45.

⁷² Dorantes de Carranza: *Sumaria relación*, p. 230.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 225.

⁷⁴ About don Juan de Guevara, son of the *poblador* Andrés de Barrios, he writes for example: “casó con doña Luisa de Saldívar y Mendoza, nieta del capitán, conquistador Luis Marín, y a su cuaderno y letra está esto referido.” *Ibidem*, p. 233.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

⁷⁶ Bacigalupo: *A Changing Perspective*, pp. 132-133.

77 persons free of conquest, who can be rewarded for being *pobladores* and having rendered other services.”⁷⁷ These were all persons who were exempted from the heritage of the conquerors, populating the land after the conquerors had robbed it of its wealth in order to return to Spain.⁷⁸ With this line of argument in mind, we should also read the entry regarding his own father in the *Sumaria relación*. The brief account of Andrés Dorantes de Carranza’s merits underline the “miraculous” nature of his services during his 2,000 league-long sojourn through the northern parts of the continent and during the years that followed.⁷⁹ As the entry makes clear, his father had again and again peacefully interacted with the natives, contributing to the gradual population of the land.

As we can see here, Dorantes tried to blur the boundary that had been drawn between two groups of meritorious subjects by establishing a single social sphere constituted by persons who deserve and are suitable for office as a result of the virtuous blood running through their veins. As a member of this American nobility, he must have had himself in mind when he urges the viceroy to grant favors “to those who merit them because of their virtues and sufficiency.” Still, he adds, the condition of belonging to this group alone was insufficient reason for meriting benefits, as he makes clear when explaining his reasons for excluding so many other families that could have been recognized as *pobladores*.⁸⁰ Although they may also have deserved the viceroy’s favor because of their status, they would rather receive than serve, he claims. Such a lack of willingness made them unworthy of any office, for anyone who deserve favor also needs to be willing to serve and be “the son of his [own] works” as well.⁸¹

FASHIONING A DESERVING SUBJECT

This additional condition of willingness to serve that Dorantes proposes for a person to be recognized as a *benemérito* was a significant one. During the previous decades, New Spain’s viceroys had repeatedly expressed critiques concern-

⁷⁷ Dorantes de Carranza: *Sumaria relación*, p. 225.

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 24.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 228.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 225.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 142.

ing the perverse effects of the New Laws. Stimulating claimants to prove the feats of their ancestors, these laws had shifted the focus away from the rendering of services as an obligatory part of receiving benefits. The viceroys were even more critical about the conventional belief that those who possessed the “quality of being born in this land [as the] son of [a] *conquistador*” were immediately fit for office as well.⁸² They considered many of those requesting a legal office to be unfit to be true “aristocrats” because of their mixed blood and qualities, while the fact that they had to resort to begging showed that they were not at all of the caliber requisite for such dignitary positions.⁸³ This tendency to lump together all *conquistadores* and to ignore the differences in social status or moment of arrival of those involved in the conquest was also observed by Viceroy Montesclaros himself at the end his tenure. In a letter to his successor, he observes that people expected the same remuneration “for the carpenter who built the brigs, and the smith who forged the nails, and he who paved the street of Mexico, [...] as for the Marquis of the Valle who conquered it.”⁸⁴

Dorantes apparently anticipated such critiques and actually used them to his advantage. Presenting himself as a “*conquistador poblador*” was one aspect of establishing his worthiness. But he could also rely on a long record of having served various viceroys.⁸⁵ He relates how he had expected to inherit his mother’s *encomienda*, providing an annual income of 5,000 pesos, but that he had lost this possession to his half-sister, leaving him “as naked as my father when he returned from Florida.”⁸⁶ Confronted by this new reality, he petitioned the Spanish Crown for a reward in 1573. During this bureaucratic process, his qualities were generally recognized. Witnesses testifying on his behalf declared that he was a man of virtue, of “good parents” and “a noble house,” who possessed a good mind, capacity, and talents that made him worthy of a royal *merced*.⁸⁷ This image was

⁸² Advertimiento de Martín Enríquez al Conde de La Coruña, 25 de septiembre de 1580. In: Hanke: Los Virreyes españoles en America, Vol. 1: pp. 211-212.

⁸³ Relación del Marqués de Montesclaros. Acapulco, 2 de Agosto de 1607. Ibidem, Vol. 2: 281.

⁸⁴ Ibidem.

⁸⁵ Dorantes de Carranza: Sumaria relación, p. 205.

⁸⁶ Ibidem, p. 229.

⁸⁷ Información, AGI, México, 212, N. 45.

confirmed by the Audiencia of Mexico, which described him as an “honorable person and of sufficient ability,” who had already received legal offices and, therefore, was worthy of receiving others.⁸⁸ Although the petition appears not to have resulted in a royal *merced*, Dorantes did nonetheless manage to gain the favor of Viceroy Martín Enríquez, serving him on his journey from Mexico City to Acapulco in 1580 but declining an offer to join the viceroy on his later journey to Peru.⁸⁹ Throughout the *Sumaria relación* he makes similar observations on his work as treasurer of the port of Veracruz and the other “offices of great quality and consideration” that he had fulfilled.⁹⁰ With these references to his own past, Dorantes underlined that he sought to put his talents and virtues to work, serving where his services were needed.

The *Sumaria relación* itself also embodies this attitude. Produced as a gift for Viceroy Montesclaros, meant to familiarize him with this new world and its inhabitants, the work is a material testimony to its author’s worthiness, testifying to his personal qualities as they were shaped by the American nature, his descent, and his own intellectual efforts. Although the *Sumaria relación* is by no means such a polished text as the ones that were produced by more experienced authors, it does demonstrate that Dorantes possessed at least some of those qualities and virtues associated with the generic image of persons suitable for office. His ability to relate worldly affairs to a wider cosmos and to relate the history of the Indies to a universal history proved his intellectual capacities.⁹¹ As the Spanish humanist Luis Vives put it, such capacities enable the forming of judgments as to the “special excellencies of mind, judgment and learning of a particular person.”⁹² This is something that Montesclaros also must have recognized. Dorantes seems to have lived up to the principle that the viceroy explained to his successor, stating that it should be made clear to those claiming *conquistador* descent that, to determine their worthiness, “one has to take into consideration the virtue of each one of them, rather than equating *conquistadores* with *corregidores*. For doing so, will

⁸⁸ Información, AGI, México, 212, N. 45, f. 27v.

⁸⁹ Dorantes de Carranza: *Sumaria relación*, p. 120.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 230.

⁹¹ Camos: *Microcosmia, y gobierno universal del hombre christiano*, p. 15.

⁹² Juan L. Vives: *On Education*. Ed. Foster Watson. Cambridge 1913, p. 34.

animate them to earn by means of their personal talents that what at the moment they believe to be theirs by right of birth.”⁹³

In Dorantes’ case, the demonstration of his skills and intelligence led to an appointment as *juez demarcador* in 1605, and Montesclaros ordered him to organize the congregation of the villages of Huacana, Churumuco and Cinagua in the province of Michoacán.⁹⁴ One of the principal duties of judges associated with the *Sala de (las) Congregaciones* was to study the qualities of places so as to determine where congregations should be formed and where pueblos should be removed (*reducción*). This prestigious office, which according to Torquemada was dotted with a wage of no less than two thousand pesos a year, required exactly the kinds of expert knowledge that Dorantes displayed in his own text.⁹⁵

CONCLUSION

Dorantes de Carranza’s *Sumaria relación de las cosas de la Nueva España* provides a revealing insight into the distributive struggles that occupied royal officials and residents of the viceroyalty at the turn of the seventeenth century. In these conflicts, competing actors sought to justify why they deserved limited available benefits more than others. Throughout his text, Dorantes engages these discussions, as he seeks to fashion himself as a subject worthy of Viceroy Montesclaros’ grace and favor. In the process, he fashions an image of a deserving self in which, in addition to his own personal merits, he also considers those qualities of his inner nature that have been shaped by the existential spheres of which he forms an inherent part. As a natural of the American continent and resident of Mexico City, he assessed the qualities prevailing in both spheres, underlining their beneficial influence on his intelligence and reasoning skills. As a member of the nobility of *conquistadores* and settlers, he shared in the virtuous deeds these men had rendered in the conquest and settlement of the land.

⁹³ Relación del Marqués de Montesclaros. In: Los Virreyes españoles en America, Vol. 2: p. 282.

⁹⁴ Ernesto Villicaña: La relación de la Guacana, Michoacán, de Baltasar Dorantes Carranza. Año de 1605. En: Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación 3, no. 4 (1962): pp. 669-702.

⁹⁵ Guillermo F. Margadant: La política de congregación de indios, en su fase más áspera (1598-1605). In: Fausto E. Rodríguez García (ed.): Estudios en honor del doctor Luis Recaséns Siches, T.I. Mexico City 1980, pp. 641-645.

Articulating a unity between these groups that did not exist at the time, Dorantes sought to elevate his own status among these two groups of naturales, which were supposed to be considered first in the distribution of legal offices and other benefits. Dorantes thus produced an elaborate self-assessment in which he managed to position himself at the top of a pyramid of those who possessed the qualities necessary to properly carry out the duties of a position within the viceregal administration. This example, I propose, provides important insight into how the self, collective identities, and a more general conception of the world interacted in the context of early modern distributive struggles. As Dorantes de Carranza demonstrates, because of the inherently relational nature of personhood, assessments of the self in such processes needed to include a wide variety of elements belonging to the many spheres of existence so as to appropriately place each person within the hierarchy of worthiness for positions and benefits.

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STEFAN RINKE

Las identidades criollas y el cambio de significado de “América” en los siglos XVII y XVIII

INTRODUCCIÓN

¿Qué es América? Tanto los europeos, creadores del nombre, como los habitantes de esta región se hacen esta pregunta desde hace más de 500 años. Puesto que la palabra “América” se refería inicialmente a las nuevas tierras en Occidente – más precisamente en el Caribe, América Central y parte de América del Sur – y a su carácter continental, el nombre ha estado ligado a ideas específicas sobre el espacio. En la historia de América se puede ver claramente que el espacio es una construcción social variable. La invención del concepto espacial del “Nuevo Mundo” hace 500 años data de los inicios de la Edad Moderna europea. El “descubrimiento” de América en Occidente no fue una meta en sí misma, sino un efecto colateral de la búsqueda de un camino más rápido hacia los tesoros de Oriente, lo cual hizo de América también un trampolín hacia Asia y pronto dio lugar a una red de relaciones entre los continentes. No obstante, en la Edad Moderna temprana el concepto de América fue controvertido desde el principio – España se aferró al concepto de “las Indias” por siglos –; “América” fue definida una y otra vez, y sus múltiples cambios de significado reflejan distintos conceptos de identidad y constelaciones de poder, los cuales estuvieron sometidos a transformaciones constantes durante los siglos. Estos iban acompañados de imaginarios como el de un “Nuevo Mundo exótico y foráneo”, o construcciones espaciales geopolíticas que iban más allá de las llamadas “líneas de amistad”. América se convirtió así en una zona de contacto entre espacios, en la que se encontraron o enfrentaron distintos movimientos provenientes tanto del norte y el sur como de oriente y occidente.

En este contexto, los criollos, descendientes de españoles nacidos en América, desarrollaron sus propias identidades colectivas, las cuales surgieron en el campo de tensión generado por sus raíces europeas e indígenas. En adelante, cuando hable de identidad colectiva lo haré desde una perspectiva sociológica y me referiré a la percepción de pertenencia a un grupo que implica un “nosotros”.

Este tipo de identidades se construyen en contextos sociales específicos por medio de formaciones discursivas y símbolos culturales. Es fundamental que estamos ante constructos que no son estáticos, sino que están en constante negociación y cuentan con una variabilidad dinámica constitutiva. La identidad se escribe una y otra vez como un palimpsesto, sin que desaparezcan del todo las capas subyacentes; o, como dice el sociólogo Peter Wagner, cuando nos ocupamos de la identidad, no es el ser, sino el ‘convertirse’ lo que está en el centro.¹ “La identidad” no existe, solo hay identidades sujetas constantemente a procesos de negociación colmados de conflicto.

Estas identidades surgieron en un contexto especial, completamente distinto al contexto social europeo de la Edad Moderna temprana. Sin embargo, como en Europa, fueron expresadas y construidas mediante actos performativos. Hasta ahora se ha prestado poca atención a los orígenes de estas identidades, sobre todo en el siglo XVII, una fase de la historia colonial sobre la cual los historiadores tienen opiniones muy disímiles. A primera vista, parecía tratarse de un periodo poco interesante: la conquista turbulenta de pueblos y reinos extranjeros ya había concluido los héroes (o villanos) de la Conquista habían muerto hace mucho, y los nuevos héroes de las batallas de independencia aún no habían nacido. Por mucho tiempo, la fase central del periodo colonial fue entonces considerada poco interesante, debido a su supuesto estancamiento y a la falta de grandes transformaciones. En la historiografía se hablaba del siglo XVII como un siglo olvidado. En comparación, el estado de la investigación acerca del siglo XVIII, casi siempre idealizado en retrospectiva, es mucho mejor. En conjunto, se trata del periodo en el que los americanos se vuelven conscientes de sí mismos; la fase en la que surge algo nuevo de la mezcla de elementos provenientes de tres continentes – desde la sociedad hasta las instituciones, pasando por las culturas – y esta nueva creación se reconoce a sí misma como tal.²

Esto es especialmente claro cuando se examina el nexo entre identidad y espacio. El muy discutido vuelco hacia el espacio y lo espacial a finales de los años 80 del siglo XIX en las ciencias sociales y los estudios culturales (*spatial*

¹ Peter Wagner: Fest-Stellungen. Beobachtungen zur sozialwissenschaftlichen Diskussion über Identität. En: Aleida Assmann y Heidrum Friese (eds.): Identitäten. Fráncfort del Meno 1998, p. 112.

² Bernd Hausberger: Hispanoamerika im ‘langen’ 17. Jahrhundert. En: Friedrich Edelmayr et al. (eds.): Die Neue Welt. Süd- und Nordamerika in ihrer kolonialen Epoche. Viena 2001, pp. 83-84.

turn), el cual estuvo íntimamente ligado a efectos de la globalización en la vida diaria, puso la pregunta acerca del origen y las transformaciones del espacio y los órdenes espaciales en el centro de la discusión. Los trabajos de Neil Smith y David Harvey fueron especialmente influyentes, pues comprobaron la importancia de las prácticas sociales como elementos constitutivos de las dinámicas de espacialización. Trabajos posteriores pusieron en evidencia que los espacios no pueden ser vistos como unidades físicas inmutables, sino que estas, en tanto categorías de experiencia alterables y construidas por individuos y colectivos, se generan a partir de percepciones y pueden ser modificadas históricamente. En su estudio sobre *La producción del espacio* (1974), Henri Lefebvre descubrió los espacios de representación como categoría de análisis, y los entendió como “simbolizaciones complejas y espacios de la imaginación”. A esto subyace el entendimiento básico de que los espacios se crean por medio de la percepción. Lo que le interesa a Lefebvre es la representación simbólica del espacio mediante signos orales, escritos y gráficos.³

A continuación quiero indagar en las interacciones entre la construcción de la identidad criolla y el concepto espacial de “América” en el contexto de sus entrelazamientos, tanto los entrelazamientos internos a nivel social como los externos en el marco global. Para hacerlo, me concentraré en las colonias españolas. América Latina se presta como ninguna otra región para la exploración de los procesos de globalización de la Edad Moderna temprana.⁴ Con el llamado “descubrimiento” empezó lo que los europeos llamaron la “Edad Moderna”. En ningún otro lugar tuvo el choque entre europeos y no-europeos efectos tan profundos y transformadores. El objetivo de la dominación colonial era el sometimiento y la reconfiguración política, cultural y religiosa. No obstante, esto no se logró completamente en ningún ámbito, debido tanto a la resistencia y a la capacidad de apropiación de los supuestos sometidos como a las debilidades de los señores coloniales. Los criollos adoptaron una extraña posición híbrida entre dominador y dominado, pues se encontraban ante el reto de orientarse entre los mundos que los marcaban y definir su singularidad al

³ Véase: Neil Smith: *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space*. Londres 1984; David Harvey: *Consciousness and the Urban Experience*. Oxford 1985. Henri Lefebvre: *The Production of Space*. Trad. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford 1974.

⁴ Bernd Hausberger: *Lateinamerika in globaler Vernetzung*. En: Birgit Schäbler (ed.): *Area Studies und die Welt: Weltregionen und neue Globalgeschichte*. Viena 2007, pp. 150-171.

interior de ellos. Para entender cómo se construyó la identidad de los criollos americanos en toda su heterogeneidad, puede ser útil el concepto de entre-espacio, entendido como un espacio de contacto en el que pueden tener lugar los procesos dinámicos de apropiación y delimitación. Pregunto entonces: ¿Qué formas la identidad criolla es posible reconocer y cómo evolucionaron hasta justo antes de las revoluciones de independencia? ¿Qué papel tuvo en ellas la forma de entender a América como espacio? ¿Qué fuerzas contribuyeron a la diferenciación del concepto de América? ¿Qué concepciones y conceptos de identidad estuvieron asociados con él? Primero describiré el punto de partida, el descubrimiento de la “patria”, es decir, las raíces de las identidades criollas en el siglo XVII. En segundo lugar, analizaré las transformaciones que tuvieron lugar en el siglo XVIII y el discurso sobre América. Se trata de un nuevo descubrimiento de América por parte de los criollos, de una americanización del espacio.

EL DESCUBRIMIENTO DE LA PATRIA

¿Hubo ya en el siglo XVII identidades americanas autónomas? ¿Se liberaron las clases intelectuales dirigentes de América de sus vínculos con España y desarrollaron una conciencia de sí mismas como americanas desde esa época? Según Anthony Pagden, desde mediados del siglo XVII las élites criollas de México y Perú creían pertenecer a una comunidad claramente diferenciable de la madre patria.⁵ Sin embargo, esta identificación por lo general no iba más allá de la región inmediata (la audiencia). Para Pagden, las élites no desarrollaron un sentido de pertenencia panamericano, sino un sentimiento de oposición frente a los españoles, quienes parecían salir siempre favorecidos en todos los asuntos y amenazaban el estatus de quienes se habían establecido desde hace mucho. En oposición, Peter Bakewell y Jorge Cañizares afirmaron, que en el siglo XVII todo seguía girando alrededor de España.⁶ Según estos autores, los criollos eran autónomos en la medida en que intentaban, con éxito, enriquecerse a costa de España, pero todavía les faltaba el sentimiento de pertenencia y el vínculo con la

⁵ Anthony Pagden: *Identity Formation in Spanish America*. En: Nicolas Canny y Anthony Pagden (eds.): *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World*. Princeton 1987, p. 51.

⁶ Peter Bakewell: *A History of Latin America: Empires and Sequels, 1450–1930*. Oxford 1997, p. 221; Jorge Cañizares Esguerra: *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic*. Stanford, CA 2001.

región. Por el contrario, los criollos seguían definiéndose a sí mismos como los más españoles y como los líderes legítimos de la sociedad colonial española.

Para poder enfrentarse a este problema, es preciso, en mi opinión, concentrarse más en un aspecto hasta ahora poco tenido en cuenta: la comprensión espacial del Nuevo Mundo, es decir, el descubrimiento de la patria por parte de los criollos en su propia región. El siglo XVII largo es el periodo en el que se difundieron por primera vez concepciones espaciales relativamente precisas del Nuevo Mundo, lo cual se vio reflejado sobre todo en la cartografía de la época.⁷ La delimitación de regiones como Perú o Brasil se volvió cada vez más precisa hasta convertirse pronto en norma. El nombre “América” – cuyo uso sin embargo siempre compitió con “las Indias” – se usó cada vez más.

Los orígenes de este nombre se remontan al siglo anterior. Esto se ve en el mapa más grande de los nuevos descubrimientos para mediados del siglo XVI, hecho por Diego Gutiérrez, el cosmógrafo de la Casa de la Contratación, y publicado por Hieronymus Cock en Amberes. El mapa explica que el nuevo continente fue nombrado en honor a Amerigo Vespucci, quien lo descubrió por encargo del rey español en 1497, es decir, en su primer viaje,⁸ con lo que se intentaba convertir el nombre “América” en una posesión de la corona española. Durante el siglo XVII la apropiación simbólica de este nombre fue el fundamento de las identidades criollas, y sentó las bases para poder sentir y representar como genuinamente “americanos” ciertos elementos creadores de colectividad.

En este sentido, es preciso destacar la dimensión religiosa. La función que tuvo desde 1670 Santa Rosa de Lima, la primera santa americana y patrona de América, en la creación de identidad se ha tematizado de diversas formas. Para los criollos, el culto a Santa Rosa era importante, pues era la prueba de haber vencido la idolatría indígena y representaba la protección duradera contra la recaída en el barbarismo indígena. Por ello, estaba basado en las convenciones barrocas europeas.

⁷ Marica Milanese: *Arsarot oder Anian? Identität und Unterscheidung zwischen Asien und der Neuen Welt in der Kartographie des 16. Jahrhunderts (1500-1570)*. En: Adriano Prosperi y Wolfgang Reinhard (eds.): *Die Neue Welt im Bewusstsein der Italiener und Deutschen des 16. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin 1991, pp. 15-16.

⁸ Traducción del texto latino: “Esta cuarta parte de la tierra permaneció desconocida para todos los geógrafos hasta el año 1497, cuando fue descubierta por Amerigo Vespuccio a servicio del rey de Castilla, por tanto recibió posteriormente el nombre del descubridor”.

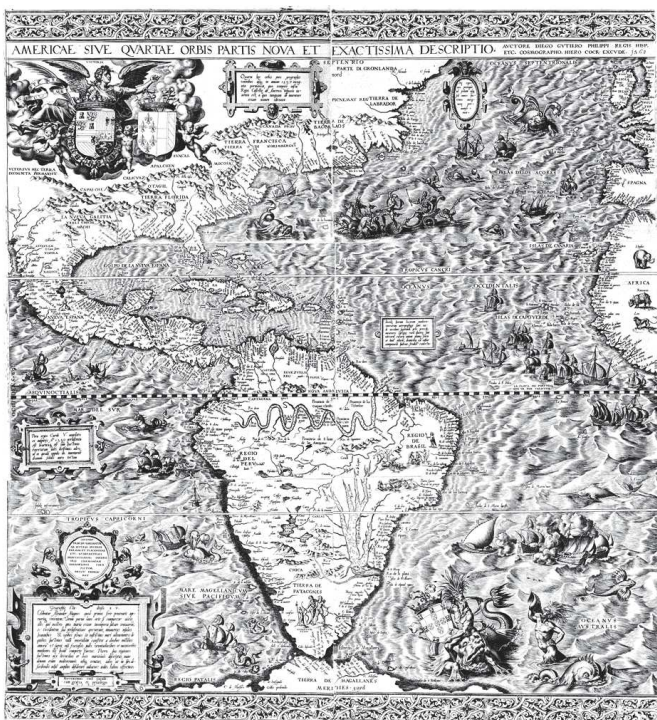


Fig. 1. Diego Gutiérrez: “Americæ sive quartæ orbis partis nova et exactissima descriptio” (Amberes: Cock, 1562).

Sin embargo, ya durante el siglo XVII se hizo evidente la búsqueda de formas de santidad genuinamente americanas, en la que se veía el antagonismo contra España, que había surgido de la condición precaria de los criollos. Los españoles de Europa habían instituido desde la década de 1560 la tesis de que el territorio americano y su clima cambiaban a sus habitantes, especialmente a los criollos que habían nacido en él, que su piel se volvía más oscura, en pocas palabras, que pronto se veían como los indígenas así no se mezclaran con ellos. Obviamente, los criollos rechazaban esta “contaminación de la sangre” causada, casi de forma natural, por el territorio foráneo.⁹

⁹ Amos Megged: The Rise of Creole Identity in Early Colonial Guatemala: Differential Patterns in Town and Countryside. En: *Social History* 17, no. 3 (1992), p. 430.

El apelativo “criollo”, usado inicialmente para referirse a los descendientes de los esclavos africanos nacidos en América, tenía ya un tono peyorativo. Aunque se describieran a sí mismos como españoles para distanciarse de otras etnias, en Europa eran “solo” criollos.¹⁰ Desde el siglo XVII los criollos se vieron confrontados con los prejuicios de los españoles en su propia tierra y, en mayor medida, cuando viajaban a Europa. Los españoles europeos no los tomaban en serio; como reclamó el dominico peruano Juan Meléndez hacia el final del siglo XVII, los viajeros americanos eran incluso equiparados con la población indígena y se llamaba a ambas etnias “indios” sin diferenciar entre ellos.¹¹ Los conceptos de “indio” o “indiano” se equiparaban con frecuencia al de “americano”.¹² Este paralelo, que desde el punto de vista de los criollos era absolutamente hiriente, fortaleció su motivación para buscar formas y símbolos típicamente americanos que subrayaran su importancia y sus propias fortalezas.

Buenaventura de Salinas y Córdova, un criollo franciscano de Nueva España, describió el Nuevo Mundo como un paraíso bíblico en un memorial de 1646 dirigido al rey. Para justificarse, Salinas se refería a las favorables constelaciones astrológicas del lugar, de las cuales deducía que sus habitantes también eran seres magníficos, tanto los criollos en su condición dominante como los súbditos indígenas. Los criollos, en especial, estaban casi por naturaleza predeterminados a tareas de liderazgo. El telón de fondo del memorial era que el clero europeo se había opuesto a ascender a Salinas a procurador general de su provincia en Roma.¹³

Otro buen ejemplo de estos contextos es la “criollización” del símbolo de la Virgen de Guadalupe en México. Esta aparición mariana a las afueras de Ciudad de México, en el lugar tradicional de adoración de la madre tierra azteca (Tonantzin), fue un producto típico del sincretismo indígena.¹⁴ Alrededor de

¹⁰ Véase al respecto John Elliott: *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830*. New Haven, CT 2006, pp. 234-235.

¹¹ Véase Ronald Morgan: *Spanish American Saints and the Rhetoric of Identity, 1600-1810*. Tucson, AZ 2002, p. 11.

¹² Elliott: *Empires of the Atlantic World*, p. 237.

¹³ Jorge Cañizares Esguerra: *New World, New Stars: Patriotic Astrology and the Invention of Indian and Creole Bodies in Colonial Spanish America, 1600-1650*. En: *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 1 (1999), p. 33.

¹⁴ En Nueva España fue especialmente importante la devoción mariana, la cual incorporó cultos y ritos indígenas. Se dice que el Indio Juan Diego presenció entre el 9 y el 12 de

1600 los clérigos criollos se dieron cuenta el potencial de la difusión de la veneración a la virgen de Tepeyac para unir más íntimamente a la población étnicamente heterogénea, sin cuestionar las jerarquías sociales y étnicas. Entre 1629 y 1634, cuando la ciudad fue amenazada en varias ocasiones por inundaciones, la salvación se le atribuyó a la Virgen de Guadalupe, la cual fue señalada a consciencia como la aparición mariana original de México. A partir de 1665 el cabildo catedralicio local mandó a documentar los milagros de la Virgen. Treinta años después, criollos acaudalados reunieron suficiente dinero para construir un nuevo lugar de adoración que fue terminado en 1704 y recibió el nombre de “Basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe”. En 1736, después de una epidemia catastrófica, fue declarada oficialmente patrona protectora de la Ciudad de México, y durante el siglo XVIII se ganó el carácter de patrona protectora de toda Nueva España y posteriormente del México independiente.

Este nuevo rol fue documentado por imágenes extraordinarias. Hasta 1615, circularon en México, con el fin de conseguir donaciones, grabados que seguían las convenciones europeas. Esto cambiaría en las décadas siguientes. La Virgen de Guadalupe que seguía los modelos europeos fue complementada como parte de una nueva visión multiétnica, como puede verse en la siguiente pintura (Fig. 2). La pintura monumental (6 x 3 metros) fue comisionada por los criollos prominentes Diego de la Concepción y José Ferrer en 1653. En una suerte de ventana ubicada en el fondo de la pintura se muestra el traslado del manto con la imagen de la Virgen hecha por el Indio Juan Diego, a quien la Virgen se le apareció por primera vez.¹⁵ La escena principal hace entonces un salto temporal y tiene lugar en la capilla ante el altar que acaba de ser construido. En ella se ven personalidades importantes como el primer obispo de México, Juan de Zumárraga, el presidente de la audiencia Sebastián Ramírez de Fuenleal y el

diciembre de 1531 una aparición de la Virgen en la figura de una indígena en el monte Tepeyac, lugar tradicional de adoración de la madre tierra Tonantzin. En este lugar se construyó una basílica para la Virgen, pero el culto inicia realmente a mediados del siglo XVII, cuando es claro que se trata de una cuestión puramente americana, en la que participan criollos e indios. Véase Jacques Lafaye: *Quetzacoatl and Guadalupe. The Formation of Mexican National Consciousness, 1531–1813*. Trans. Benjamin Keen. Chicago 1976; Miguel León-Portilla y Antonio Valeriano: *Tonantzin Guadalupe: pensamiento náhuatl y mensaje cristiano en el “Nicān mopōhua”*. México 2000.

¹⁵ Richard L. Kagan: *Urban Images of the Hispanic World*. New Haven, CT 2000, pp. 162-165.



Fig. 2. Anón.: “Traslado de la imagen de la Virgen Guadalupe a su nueva Basílica” (México, ca. 1655).

mismo Juan Diego experimentando un nuevo milagro de la Virgen, quien está salvando a un indígena derribado por equivocación con una flecha. Puesto que el primer santuario de la Virgen Santa fue construido alrededor de 1550 – por pronto–, la escena no pudo haber sucedido de esta forma, sino que se trata de una figuración del cliente. Su objetivo es crear una comunidad conformada por las diversas etnias, las cuales pueden reunirse en torno al santuario mexicano. Al igual que en el caso de Salinas, América se presenta como un territorio elegido por Dios, como se ve en la aparición mariana.¹⁶ La gente se sentía en el centro espiritual del mundo, no en su periferia.

El factor de la espacialización es importante, pues, en contra de las convenciones del momento, en este caso es posible reconocer el lago de Texcoco y el valle de México. Los procesos de identificación no solo funcionaban en sentido negativo, es decir, asociados a la diferenciación de España. En un sentido positivo, era posible construir un orgullo regional basado en la igualdad de derechos – al menos en teoría – de los nuevos territorios como reinos autónomos, los “reinos de las Indias”. Si bien los criollos se sentían vinculados a España por el idioma, el origen étnico, la religión y la obediencia a la misma

¹⁶ Jeanette Favrot Peterson: *Visualizing Guadalupe: From Black Madonna to Queen of the Americas*. Austin, TX 2014, p. 112.

corona, la relación con el espacio americano, y la singularidad de las sociedades y culturas, hacían que también fueran distintos a los españoles, y cada vez se volvieron más conscientes de esta singularidad.¹⁷

Aunque a finales del siglo XVI un censo guatemalteco clasificaba a los ciudadanos blancos con ciudadanía completa – los “vecinos” – en “españoles europeos” y “españoles”, siendo estos últimos los criollos, esto cambiaría para incluir el concepto de “español americano”, con lo cual se hizo más clara la relación con el territorio.¹⁸ Esta espacialización se hace clara en la obra del pensador mexicano más importante de la época, Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora (1645-1700). Sigüenza y Góngora dibujó el primer mapa del virreinato de Nueva España, el cual estuvo vigente por décadas. En sus obras literarias siempre hizo énfasis en la contribución de los indígenas nativos a la gloria de su patria novoespañola-mexicana, con lo que sentó las bases para una comprensión autónoma del territorio americano, al cual también debía adaptarse la noción de dominación europea. Sigüenza y Góngora desarrolló su punto de vista cuando fue comisionado por el cabildo de México para escribir una obra de teatro con ocasión de la llegada de un nuevo virrey en 1680. En su *Teatro de Virtudes Políticas*, Sigüenza y Góngora inserta deliberadamente al virrey en la sucesión de emperadores aztecas mexicanos, los cuales son representados como gobernantes virtuosos según estándares europeos. Esta pieza de autonomía americana fue representada para el virrey bajo el arco del triunfo en el que fue recibido por el concejo. En ella, lo americano se convierte en un espacio de imaginación que el representante del dominio europeo no puede evadir. Sigüenza y Góngora describe a consciencia tanto América en general como la patria en la que vivía. Para él, América, como espacio, significaba la simbiosis de elementos indígenas y europeos.¹⁹

¹⁷ Solange Alberro: *Del gachupín al criollo: o de cómo los españoles de México dejaron de serlo*. México 1992, pp. 79-81.

¹⁸ Megged: *The Rise of Creole Identity in Early Colonial Guatemala*, p. 422. Acerca de “español americano”, véase Anthony McFarlane: *Identity, Enlightenment and Political Dissent in Late Colonial Spanish America*. En: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 8 (1998), p. 320.

¹⁹ Kagan: *Urban Images*, p. 152.



Fig. 3. Anón.: Unión entre los descendientes de los incas y las casas de Loyola y Borja (Escuela de Cuzco, 1718. Museo Pedro de Osma, Lima).

El elemento de la simbiosis exitosa también se hace claro en esta pintura del año 1718 de un maestro anónimo de la escuela de Cuzco (Fig. 3), en la cual se muestra el matrimonio de las élites españolas-criollas de las casas Loyola y Borja con los descendientes de los incas, los cuales son representados de forma prominente en la parte superior izquierda de la imagen.²⁰ En el centro están los dos santos jesuitas Ignacio de Loyola y Francisco de Borja, antepasados de los dos novios. El aspecto del género también es interesante, pues los hombres con antepasados europeos se casan con mujeres de origen indígena. En cambio, los indígenas “auténticos” pertenecen al pasado. En el fondo bajo el luminoso monograma de cristo se reconoce la iglesia jesuita de Cuzco que fue construida

²⁰ Adelante a la izquierda: Martín García de Loyola (sobrino de Ignacio) y doña Beatriz (hija de Sairi Tupac); junto a ellos en el centro: San Ignacio con las normas jesuitas en la mano; arriba a la derecha: los padres de la novia y Tupac Amaru I (ejecutado en 1572). Adelante a la derecha: La hija del matrimonio de la derecha, Doña Lorenza, se casa con Don Juan de Borja, un hijo de San Francisco, el cual está atrás con su símbolo, una calavera. Ambos matrimonios habían tenido lugar en el siglo XVI. Elliott: *Empires of the Atlantic World*, solapa.

sobre los cimientos del palacio de Huayna Cápac desde 1576. Entonces, es posible reconocer las construcciones sagradas erigidas sobre los cimientos de los palacios incas. Lo que se representa aquí es la fusión espacial y temporal de los elementos indígenas y europeos, si bien la orientación europea todavía es muy evidente. Europa está sentada, por así decirlo, adelante (las personas) o arriba (la arquitectura) y prevalece también en el mestizaje, como se ve en la comparación de la representación de los dos novios. Sin embargo, las raíces son indígenas. Los indígenas ya no se callarán con vergüenza ni serán marginados como el otro que debe ser vencido.

Tanto el orden simbólico de esta y muchas otras obras de arte como el registro cartográfico del espacio por parte de Sigüenza y Góngora y otros eran categorías de identidad en el descubrimiento del territorio americano. Como mostró Serge Gruzinski en su trabajo *Les quatre parties du monde*, en estas representaciones los criollos americanos también se ubicaban a sí mismos a nivel global.²¹ Al oriente estaba el Viejo Mundo compuesto por Europa y África, al occidente las relaciones con las Filipinas eran la puerta de entrada a los tesoros de Oriente. América estaba entonces en el centro del mundo y funcionaba como puente.

En efecto, el franciscano Agustín de Vetancurt estaba en condiciones de decir en 1696 que América era un microcosmos del mundo y que había sido elegida por la providencia para proveer a la tierra de plata y oro.²² No obstante, en este periodo esta construcción confiada de los territorios americanos ocurrió en un marco discursivo claramente restringido. Por un lado, la orientación hacia España, que seguía siendo bastante fuerte, llevaba a un uso mesurado de los conceptos de “América” y “americano”, los cuales seguían siendo utilizados de forma despectiva en Europa; por el otro, la inclusión consciente de elementos indígenas en la construcción de lo propio – la Virgen que se había aparecido en América o los antepasados indígenas, en el caso de nuestros ejemplos – tenía sus límites cuando se trataba de mantener la jerarquía social. Sigüenza y Góngora, por ejemplo, le volvió la espalda a los indios y mestizos que habitaban de verdad en su patria, cuando estos tomaron la palabra en una revuelta en contra del

²¹ Serge Gruzinski: *Les quatre parties du monde: Histoire d'une mondialisation*. Paris 2006.

²² Cañizares: *New World, New Stars*, pp. 64-65.

hambre en 1692.²³ Para él se había alcanzado un límite, lo cual estaba de acuerdo con el punto de vista de las élites dominantes de la época. A pesar de querer distanciarse de los españoles de Europa, para los criollos era impensable identificarse con las heterogéneas clases bajas. Una vez ante ellos, se sentían comprometidos con la herencia cultural europea y subrayaban la propia “pureza de la sangre”,²⁴ en la que se basaba el orden social.

En vista de la problemática social, no es posible entonces hablar de una identidad criollo-americana estable en el siglo XVII. Si bien había elementos que podían valer como elementos creadores de comunidad, dicha comunidad implicaba el riesgo de derribar las jerarquías sociales, el cual asustaba a las clases dirigentes criollas. Es por esto que la dimensión española-europea de símbolos populares como la Virgen de Guadalupe siguió siendo importante. No obstante, la referencia al espacio americano, que se ordena de nuevo en su carácter híbrido, muestra nuevas dimensiones de identidad específicamente americanas que fueron cada vez más importantes en el periodo posterior.

LA AMERICANIZACIÓN DEL ESPACIO

Durante el siglo XVIII las referencias a América se hicieron cada vez más explícitas. Se llegó a una “americanización” del espacio por parte de los criollos. Para entender el cambio de las identidades criollas en el siglo XVIII es necesario dar nuevamente una mirada breve al discurso europeo sobre América. Durante el siglo XVIII se usó cada vez con más frecuencia el concepto de “América” en el lenguaje común europeo, lo cual reflejaba el aumento de conocimiento acerca del continente. No obstante, el saber sobre América, que ahora se recogía enciclopédicamente, estaba todavía marcado por estereotipos. La entrada “América” en el diccionario enciclopédico universal de Johan Heinrich Zedler de 1732 (que comprendía todas las ciencias y artes) describía a los americanos

²³ Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora: Alboroto y motín de los indios de México (1692). En: http://www.biblioteca.tv/artman2/publish/1692_316/Alboroto_y_Mot_n_de_M_xico_Carlos_de_Sig_enza_y_G_632.shtml

²⁴ Stefan Rinke: Limpieza de Sangre (“Reinheit des Bluts”). En: Wolfgang Benz (ed.): Handbuch der Antisemitismusforschung – Judenfeindschaft in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Berlín 2010, T. III, pp. 191-192.

como “maliciosos, salvajes, crueles y de naturaleza verdaderamente malvada”²⁵ y no olvidaba referirse al canibalismo practicado por los habitantes del Nuevo Mundo en épocas anteriores. No obstante, precisaba que “el trato con los europeos [...] ha disminuido notablemente el salvajismo de los americanos y los ha hecho mucho más afables”.²⁶



Fig. 4. Giovanni Battista Tiepolo: América (Fragmento del fresco ubicado en el techo de las escaleras de la Residencia de Wurzburg, 1752/53).

Este salvajismo indómito aparece en el famoso fresco de techo pintado por Tiepolo en la Residencia de Wurzburg en 1752/53 (Fig. 4). América es mostrada como continente joven y salvaje en la figura de la amazona desnuda coronada con plumas sobre un poderoso cocodrilo. A su alrededor aparecen cabezas cortadas y una fiesta con rasgos infernales. Europa, en cambio, aparece como refugio de las artes y la civilización, de las cuales Wurzburg era el centro. El sentimiento de superioridad de Europa respecto a América y sus habitantes, que en este caso son claramente equiparados con la población indígena, no era nuevo. Como tampoco lo eran las justificaciones derivadas del clima y

²⁵ Johann Heinrich Zedler: Großes vollständiges Universal Lexikon Aller Wissenschaften und Künste. Halle/Leipzig 1732, p. 1723.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

otros factores para alegar supuestos déficits y debilidades de la flora y la fauna americanas, las cuales aparecieron, como ya se dijo, en el siglo XVI. Lo que sí era nuevo era la gran diseminación que alcanzó la pretensión de verdad pseudo-científica de los letrados europeos de la Ilustración, y el tipo de reacciones que ocasionó en América.²⁷

El punto de partida fue la *Historia naturelle* de Buffon, en la que el escritor francés defendía la opinión de que América era un continente geológicamente más joven con un clima no saludable en el que solo se desarrollaron pocos animales, los cuales eran más pequeños comparados con los del Viejo Mundo.²⁸ Según Buffon, las especies europeas se degenerarían si fueran trasplantadas a América, y la población autóctona estaba también retrasada corporal y mentalmente.²⁹ En general, decía Buffon, América era inmadura, se encontraba en un estadio de la infancia que no podía superar. El filósofo natural holandés Cornelius de Pauw esparció y recrudenció estas tesis, especialmente la idea de que las especies emigradas de Europa a América, sean animales, plantas o seres humanos, se degeneran necesariamente, tanto corporal como mentalmente, debido a las condiciones naturales del lugar.³⁰ Gracias a su utilidad para justificar el eurocentrismo, la teoría de la degeneración tuvo muchos seguidores entre los pensadores importantes de la época,³¹ y esta diferenciación entre los continentes resultó marcar el futuro de la aproximación de Europa con América. La pretensión científica y el supuesto carácter irrefutable de estas teorías hicieron que las personas a las que se referían, los habitantes de América, se pusieran más a la defensiva.

²⁷ Stefan Rinke: Vom „ersten Amerika“ zu ‚Amerika‘: Der Bedeutungswandel des Namens ‚Amerika‘ im Zeitalter der Revolutionen. En: Stefan Rinke y Ursula Lehmkuhl (eds.): *Amerika – Amerikas: Zur Geschichte eines Namens von 1507 bis zur Gegenwart*. Stuttgart 2008, pp. 87-89.

²⁸ Georges-Louis Leclerc Buffon: *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière, avec la description du Cabinet du Roi*. 44 tomos. Paris 1749-1840.

²⁹ Lo cual él deducía de la falta de barba y los órganos sexuales menos pronunciados. Véase, por ejemplo, la comparación del reino animal en *ibidem*. T. 9, pp. 55ff. Véase también Antonello Gerbi: *Viejas polémicas sobre el Nuevo Mundo*. Lima 1943, pp. 13-31.

³⁰ Corneille de Pauw: *Recherches philosophiques sur les Américaines ou Mémoires intéressants pour servir à l'Histoire de l'Espèce humaine*. 2 tomos. Berlín 1768-1769.

³¹ Por ejemplo el pensador ilustrado escocés William Robertson: *The History of America*. Edimburgo 1777.

La muy aceptada teoría de la decadencia y las imágenes e ideas negativas sobre América derivadas de ella fueron recibidas con oposición en la misma América. Los jesuitas fueron los que más criticaron las tesis de los teóricos de la degeneración. El contexto fue la expulsión de la orden de España y sus colonias en 1767, la cual puede atribuirse sobre todo al clima anti jesuita de la Ilustración. El objetivo de autores como el ecuatoriano Juan de Velasco³² o el chileno Juan Ignacio Molina³³ era rectificar todas las falsas imágenes de América y rescatar la honra del territorio. El mejor ejemplo es el del mexicano Francisco Javier Clavijero (1731-1787), quien publicó su obra más importante, la *Historia antigua de México*, desde su exilio en Italia en 1780. En el prefacio, Clavijero aclara su objetivo: “disuadir a los incautos lectores de los errores en que han incurrido muchos autores modernos”, quienes escribieron sobre América sin tener suficientes conocimientos,³⁴ con lo que se refería en primera línea a de Pauw. La mayor parte del trabajo de Clavijero estaba dedicada a una representación intensiva del valle central de México, introducido deliberadamente con el nombre azteca Anáhuac, y de la historia de México. Con él inició la tendencia de idealizar la alta cultura indígena, casi como si fuera la antigüedad de América, localizándola en el espacio americano genuino. No sólo los jesuitas exiliados, sino también las clases altas criollas descubrieron el pasado precolombino y su espacio como fuente de identidad americana.

A esto se sumaron otros factores: como parte de su política de reforma, la corona quería mejorar las estructuras económicas de las colonias para poder explotarlas de forma más efectiva. Al igual que en la madre patria, cuestionó los privilegios de la clase dirigente criolla. Por lo tanto, promovió expediciones científicas a finales del siglo XVIII para hacer un inventario de las condiciones geográficas, botánicas y económicas de cada territorio. En estas expediciones participaron cada vez más criollos interesados, los cuales encontraron una confirmación científica para lo que afirmaban desde hace mucho: su América ofrecía posibilidades de desarrollo, que no habían podido desarrollarse debido a una política colonial errada. Gracias a los inventarios sistemáticos de índole económico-geográfica (p. ej. el de Francisco José de Caldas en la Nueva Gra-

³² Historia del reino de Quito (1789).

³³ Historia geográfica, natural y civil del reino de Chile (1782-87).

³⁴ Francisco de Clavijero: *Historia antigua de México*. Ed. Mariano Cuevas. México 1986, pp. XVII-XVIII, pp. 422-423.

nada), los territorios americanos se convirtieron en factores de creación de identidad. La gente se encontraba en salones – en las tertulias patrióticas – o en las “sociedades de los amigos de la patria”, que habían surgido como nuevas formas de comunidad siguiendo los ejemplos españoles. En estos círculos se impuso la idea de una unidad económica de la propia nación y una única unión de súbditos derivada de esta en regiones hasta ahora divididas. Se hicieron sugerencias para mejorar en la agricultura, el comercio, la industria y la defensa del territorio, en las que siempre se criticaban las debilidades económicas y políticas de España y se mencionaban los impedimentos causados por la política española.³⁵

Para los criollos, la Ilustración significaba creer en el proceso y el patriotismo, entendido como la participación activa en el progreso del propio territorio. Lo que ocurrió aquí fue el reconocimiento de la particularidad criolla, la identidad americana, la cual estaba relacionada con la unidad administrativa correspondiente, la audiencia. Así, hacia el final del siglo XVIII comenzó a gestarse una nueva orientación cultural que empezó a deshacerse de la dependencia colonial y se propagó mediante nuevas formas de comunicación y sobre todo por medio periódicos avisados en política educativa. El despertar del patriotismo y el optimismo, acompañado de una llamada a la razón siempre también una crítica implícita a los señores coloniales europeos.

El cuadro de 1770 de un pintor desconocido del virreinato del Perú muestra esto muy claramente (Fig. 5). El uso panfletario de la alegoría del continente pone algunas cosas en evidencia. Por un lado, América ya no es la India desnuda de las alegorías europeas anteriores, sino una dama vestida y coronada según las convenciones europeas. Por el otro, se puede ver claramente que los niños desprotegidos a los que se refiere el texto son indígenas. Se puede ver entonces una conciencia de sí dividida, la cual busca referirse tanto a Europa como a la herencia indígena. Al mismo tiempo hay un claro distanciamiento del antiguo poder colonial, el cual prácticamente provoca una ruptura de los derechos naturales al obligar a América a cuidar de sus “hijos” – los virreyes, prelados y funcionarios –, mientras los verdaderos americanos pasan hambre. La escena,

³⁵ Manuel José Forero: Las expediciones botánicas de la Nueva Granada y de la Nueva España. En: *Boletín de historia y antigüedades* (Bogotá) 61, no. 704 (1974), pp. 143-152.



Fig. 5. Anón.: América amamanta niños de la nobleza española (Perú ca. 1770).

sin embargo, tiene lugar en un espacio que semeja un jardín ideal, un paraíso opulento que ofrece en abundancia todo lo necesario.³⁶

La nueva definición simbólica del territorio americano ocurrió en el contexto de un aumento de los roces políticos entre las colonias y la madre patria. Desde más o menos la mitad del siglo XVIII, la corona española intentó impulsar reformas que seguían el espíritu del absolutismo ilustrado. Los americanos protestaron a este intento de transformar las posesiones americanas en verdaderas colonias e intensificar la intervención en ellas – una segunda conquista, como se le llamó en América. Mientras crecía la protesta en respuesta a la nueva forma de explotación económica y a la discriminación política, los conflictos bélicos estremecían cada vez más los cimientos de la dominación española. Lo anterior se hizo muy evidente en una petición del Cabildo de México al rey Carlos III en

³⁶ Hans-Joachim König, Michael Riekenberg y Stefan Rinke (eds.): *Die Eroberung einer neuen Welt*. Schwalbach 2005, p. 275.

1771. La denuncia de que los criollos no eran tenidos en cuenta para cargos públicos culminó en la acusación de que los españoles europeos prácticamente eran “extranjeros en América [...] por naturaleza”. La apelación al derecho natural por parte del Concejo se hizo más que evidente al enfatizar el amor de los seres humanos por su lugar de nacimiento, su patria. Este amor, argumentaba, era el requisito fundamental para poder ser un buen funcionario. El extranjero, a quien le faltaba este amor patrio, no podía estar al servicio del bienestar común de una ciudad, una provincia o un reino. Por el contrario, puesto que para desempeñar su cargo en América tenía que alejarse de su propia patria, se sentiría como un desterrado y odiaría su nuevo entorno.³⁷

Paradójicamente, las reformas de la corona, pensadas para fortalecer el dominio colonial, trajeron consigo el germen de su derrota. El impulso de la insatisfacción y la rebelión vino de afuera, de la madre patria, la cual, según la perspectiva de los criollos americanos, generaba dificultades inaceptables. Este impulso llegó en un momento en el que entre los círculos educados de América se difundían ideas colectivas de espíritu ilustrado acerca de la soberanía del pueblo, los derechos naturales del ser humano y el ciudadano, y las ventajas del sistema de gobierno republicano.

El jesuita de origen peruano Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzmán, quien había luchado por años en Inglaterra por conseguir apoyo para una rebelión de la América española, resumió esta insatisfacción en su famosa “Carta a los hispanoamericanos”, de 1799, en la que reclamaba el “Nuevo Mundo” y su historia para los criollos y hablaba ofensivamente de “nuestra patria”. Según Viscardo, para efectos del interés criollo era necesario analizar “nuestras necesidades fundamentales”, “nuestra situación presente”, para encontrar después el camino que mejor correspondiera a los intereses propios. La constatación de la oposición esencial e irremediable entre los intereses de España y los intereses de América, y la caracterización de la potencia colonial como una tirana, incluso como dueña de esclavos, concluye con el llamado: “descubramos américa nuevamente para todos nuestros hermanos en toda la tierra [...]!”³⁸ Americanos

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 274.

³⁸ Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzmán: Carta dirigida a los españoles americanos. Ed. David Brading. México 2005. Publicada inicialmente en francés 1799, posteriormente en español en 1801 y en inglés.

como Viscardo abrieron el camino hacia la independencia. El nombre América se convirtió en la quintaesencia de una lucha libertaria anticolonial.

RESUMEN

En el reino colonial de las Indias, los criollos se enfrentaron al reto de orientarse entre los mundos que los determinaban y definir su identidad en ellos. Vivían en entre-espacios multidimensionales, donde eran decisivos el contacto y las distintas formas de entender el espacio. En cuanto al concepto central de identidad, se puede decir que el caso de los criollos americanos era un caso especial: los criollos dominaban – otras etnias – y al mismo tiempo eran dominados – por los europeos. Por lo tanto, sus discursos de identidad giraban, por un lado, en torno a la búsqueda de representaciones de lo propio, con las que buscaban contrarrestar las atribuciones hechas desde afuera por los europeos. Por otro parte, el discurso de identidad también reflejaba el que para los criollos, como grupo dominante, también era importante organizar su entorno político de tal forma que las clases sociales, las cuales eran étnicamente heterogéneas, estuvieran obligadas a cumplir ciertas normas supuestamente acordes a su naturaleza.

Esta situación provocó procesos dinámicos de apropiación y diferenciación, que hicieron que el periodo colonial español estuviera marcado por distintas formas de identidad criolla. Todas estas formas de identidad tienen una fuerte relación con el espacio, la cual ha sido poco investigada hasta ahora. Primero vino el descubrimiento de su región como patria, como lugar de lo propio, el cual fue ordenado cartográficamente y transformado o expresado en una identidad por medio de actos performativos. Desde muy temprano, los criollos defendieron a América – como dimensión de referencia – del desprecio del Viejo Mundo. A los criollos les importaban sus propios intereses, incluido, o quizá especialmente, su posición privilegiada en el sistema colonial.

Durante los dos siglos examinados aquí hubo una expansión de la mirada. El espacio se americanizó al ser construido como una unidad capaz de crear sentido, sin dejar de vista las diferencias regionales. Entre más caía en crisis el sistema colonial, más atractivo y diferenciado se volvió el concepto de América, no solo como un distanciamiento de España, sino también como una ocupación positiva del espacio. Un aspecto revelador es la dimensión global de la local-

zación que los criollos se atribuían a sí mismos, pues se ubicaban en la intersección entre dos espacios distintos, el Viejo y el Nuevo Mundo. Así, la identidad criolla pudo nutrirse también de la percepción del territorio americano como el centro del mundo elegido por la providencia.

No obstante, después de la independencia la idea de un territorio americano común no fue un aglutinante lo suficientemente fuerte para desarrollar proyectos de alcance transregional. Las viejas élites criollas siguieron marcando la pauta después de las guerras de independencia y, si bien su retórica decía lo contrario, para ellas eran esenciales las redes de relaciones personales que funcionaban en los marcos locales y regionales. La lealtad a una comunidad como América, la cual era más bien abstracta debido a sus enormes dimensiones, no pudo prevalecer. Por eso fracasó el panamericanismo de Bolívar.

Por otra parte, a mediados del siglo concluyó un proceso que cambió de forma decisiva el nombre ‘América’. A mediados del siglo XIX en la mayoría de los idiomas América denominaba las otrora pequeñas e insignificantes colonias inglesas después de la independencia iban camino a ser la potencia hegemónica de América. La “primera América” del sur ya no cabía en este concepto.

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DELPHINE TEMPÈRE

**En las fronteras del mundo iberoasiático.
Discurso y vida de los agentes de la Corona española
en Filipinas (Siglo XVII)***

“Para que conste a V. Real persona lo mucho y bien que le e servido de treinta y cinco años a esta parte assi en los rreynos de españa y en las yndias y en estas yslas”.¹

En la cita que encabeza el presente trabajo, Francisco López Tamayo, un oficial de la Corona española que vivía en Manila, se dirigía al rey en 1616 para hacer valer sus méritos. Le recordaba su compromiso leal durante más de treinta años por el mundo: en Europa, “en los reinos de España”, en América, “en las Indias”, pero también, “en estas yslas”, es decir en Filipinas. En el Archivo General de Indias se conserva el expediente de López Tamayo, así como el de tantos otros, en dos fuentes complementarias, las *relaciones de méritos*² y las *informaciones de oficio y parte*³. Estudiar estos fondos documentales resulta ser relevante, ya que proporciona numerosas informaciones acerca de los agentes de la Monarquía hispánica que cruzaron medio mundo para asentarse en Filipinas y

* Esta contribución es una versión adaptada de un artículo, que se publicó en francés, en la revista e-Spania: Récits de vie et itinéraires semi-planétaires des agents de la Couronne espagnole au XVII^e siècle. En: Louise Bénat-Tachot y Nejma Kermele (eds.): *Écriture de l’histoire et itinérance dans l’Amérique coloniale ibérique (XVI^e- XVII^e siècle)*. En: e-Spania [en línea] 26 de febrero de 2017. <https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/26425>. Agradezco a Isabel Galaor por la lectura y las correcciones de dicho trabajo en español.

¹ Traslados de las informaciones de oficio y parte de Francisco López Tamayo. 1616. Archivo General de Indias (en adelante AGI), Filipinas, 60, N. 21, imagen 1.

² Ver un estudio de esta fuente documental en Rosa María Gregori Roig: *Representación pública del individuo. Relaciones de méritos y servicios en el Archivo General de Indias (siglos XVII-XVIII)*. En: Antonio Castillo Gómez (ed.): *El legado de Mnemosyne. Las escrituras del yo a través del tiempo*. Gijón 2007, pp. 355-379.

³ Agradezco a Bernd Hausberger, del Colegio de México, el haberme indicado la existencia de esta fuente que había llamado su atención.

que solicitaron una merced real en virtud de la justicia distributiva. Al describir sus hazañas y los servicios brindados por los diferentes territorios de la Monarquía, los súbditos del rey – oficiales, eclesiásticos, militares – intentaban obtener de esta manera un cargo en la Audiencia de Manila, una dignidad eclesiástica o bien una encomienda. Estudiar dichas peticiones, ahora conservadas en los ramos de Indiferente General⁴ y Filipinas⁵, permite profundizar, por una parte, en el tema de la movilidad a través de los territorios de la Monarquía hispánica y, por otra parte, en la construcción de los discursos – individuales y a la par imperiales – de los súbditos.⁶

Así planteamos en esta contribución dos interrogantes. El primero nos lleva a reflexionar sobre la articulación de los reinos: ¿en qué manera la movilidad de los súbditos españoles en Asia reflejó la cohesión, o no, de la Monarquía hispánica a través del mundo? El segundo interrogante nos invita a reflexionar sobre la representación que los súbditos tenían de sí mismos, el *self-fashioning*, eje central de este libro: ¿cómo representaron los agentes al rey su trayectoria vital?, ¿qué recursos y ardidés emplearon para satisfacer las exigencias de la Corona?, ¿qué informaciones podemos sacar de esta representación individual en un contexto imperial? Para responder a dichos interrogantes, esta contribución se articula en tres partes. La primera, muy breve, a modo de contextualización, se centra en el contexto geográfico e histórico de las Filipinas en el siglo XVII, la segunda, en las fuentes utilizadas y las precauciones metodológicas que se imponen, la tercera, en las trayectorias vitales de unos veinte españoles asentados en Filipinas que dedicaron su vida, según sus palabras, “para servir a Dios y su Rey”, sea adoctrinando a los recién convertidos, sea juzgando a sus parecidos o administrando las caudales de la Real Hacienda en el archipiélago, sea combatiendo para defender la Monarquía: luchando, saqueando, quemando, matando, y decapitando a los “enemigos”.

⁴ Para las relaciones de méritos.

⁵ Para las informaciones de oficio y parte trasladadas de Filipinas a España.

⁶ Como lo subraya Carlos Alberto González Sánchez, “el mérito es una de las claves del nuevo yo”. Ver su libro: *Homo viator, homo scribens*. Cultura gráfica, información y gobierno en la expansión atlántica (siglos XV- XVII). Madrid 2007, p. 79.

LAS FILIPINAS ESPAÑOLAS EN EL SIGLO XVII: UN MUNDO FRONTERIZO

Filipinas, ¿por qué? En primer lugar, y desde un punto de vista histórico-geográfico, porque eran los territorios más lejanos de la Corona española separados por dos océanos – el Atlántico y el Pacífico – y por el continente americano, dicho de otra manera, medio mundo. Filipinas en el contexto del siglo XVII, ofrecen, así pues, características muy relevantes para analizar la movilidad de los súbditos españoles, ya que para alcanzar el archipiélago era necesario emprender un viaje de un año o dos, embarcar en las flotas de Indias, recorrer el continente americano de Veracruz a Acapulco, viajar a bordo del Galeón de Manila, para por fin asentarse en los confines del mundo.⁷

En segundo lugar, y desde un punto de vista geo-político, porque Filipinas en aquella época se situaban en la frontera marcada por el tratado de Zaragoza (1529): el tratado que permitió delimitar el hemisferio portugués del español en Asia.⁸ La ubicación singular del archipiélago permite, por lo tanto, estudiar las interacciones entre el mundo español y portugués en los confines asiáticos, tanto durante el periodo de unión de las coronas (1580-1640), como después. Además, Filipinas ofrecen un escenario muy interesante a la hora de analizar los desplazamientos y las conexiones que podían establecer los ibéricos con el mundo chino o japonés. Recordemos que las Filipinas mantenían relaciones comerciales con China, pero también con Japón, incluso más allá, con Java y la India. El archipiélago filipino conectaba pues, tanto el mundo asiático con el americano, como los territorios españoles con los de los portugueses, y más allá aún.

En tercer lugar, y desde un punto de vista cronológico, elegimos trabajar Filipinas durante el siglo XVII, ya que estos años se caracterizaron por los múltiples conflictos que estallaron entre diversas naciones o grupos de individuos: ya fueran entre europeos (holandeses, ingleses, portugueses y españoles),

⁷ Delphine Tempère: “Y los que de Manila van a Nueva España dizen que van de la China a Castilla”: les enjeux des voies océaniques du Pacifique et du Galion de Manille. En: Louise Bénat-Tachot (ed.): *Quelle histoire globale au XVI^e siècle?* En: *e-Spania* [en línea] 30 de junio de 2018. <https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/27900>.

⁸ Lourdes Díaz-Trechuelo: *El Tratado de Tordesillas y su proyección en el Pacífico*. En: *Revista española del Pacífico*, no. 4 (1994), pp. 11-21; Serge Gruzinski: *L'aigle et le dragon. Démesure européenne et mondialisation au XVI^e siècle*. Paris 2012, p. 64.

o, entre asiáticos y europeos.⁹ Estudiar las trayectorias vitales de los actores inter-imperiales que conectaban mundos¹⁰ supone entender mejor las situaciones de contacto y de conflicto en el marco de la Monarquía hispánica a través del mundo.¹¹ De hecho, en Filipinas y en los mares circundantes, los súbditos españoles irrumpieron en las vidas de los portugueses, holandeses, filipinos, malayos, chinos o japoneses y dejaron constancia de sus actos en las relaciones de méritos que hicieron redactar.

LAS FUENTES: LAS INFORMACIONES DE OFICIO Y PARTE Y LAS RELACIONES DE MÉRITOS Y SERVICIOS

El sistema de justicia distributiva en España en la Edad Moderna era una herencia de la época medieval. Según la obligación mutua entre el soberano y su súbdito, el rey podía en aquel entonces otorgar una merced, material o simbólica, un territorio o un título de nobleza, para gratificar al demandante que presentaba una *petición de gracia y merced*.¹² Se trataba de la economía de la merced como la describió Jean-Pierre Dedieu.¹³ Es decir, la obligación moral que incumbía al rey para que recompensara a los súbditos en función de sus méritos. Esta economía de la merced se traspasó a principios del siglo XVI a las

⁹ Un panorama histórico sobre Filipinas en Lourdes Díaz-Trechuelo: *Filipinas. La gran desconocida (1565-1898)*. Pamplona 2001.

¹⁰ Como lo subraya Serge Gruzinski, “[...] c’est le mouvement des hommes qui confère son unité à l’espace de la monarchie”. Ver su artículo: *Les mondes mêlés de la Monarchie catholique et autres connected histories*. In: *Annales* 56, no. 1 (2001), p. 106.

¹¹ Sanjay Subrahmanyam propone este método de análisis en su artículo: *Par-delà l’incalculabilité: pour une histoire connectée des empires aux temps modernes*. En: *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine*, no. 54-4bis (2007), p. 52.

¹² Robert Folger: *Writing as Poaching. Interpellation and Self-Fashioning in Colonial Relaciones de Méritos y Servicios*. Leiden/Boston 2011, p. 18. El filólogo Folger encontró en las *Siete Partidas* de Alfonso el Sabio esta obligación moral que le incumbía al rey: “poniendo a cada uno en su lugar qual le conviene por su linaje o por su bondad o por su servicio” en la Partida II, título 10, ley 2. Más tarde, después de la Reconquista, este tipo de peticiones al rey se hicieron cada vez más frecuentes por parte de los soldados. Ver al respecto: Luis Miguel Córdoba Ochoa: *Movilidad geográfica, capital cosmopolita y relaciones de méritos. Las élites del Imperio entre Castilla, América y el Pacífico*. En: Bartolomé Yun Casalilla (ed.): *Las redes del Imperio: élites sociales en la articulación de la Monarquía Hispánica*. Madrid 2009, p. 360.

¹³ Jean-Pierre Dedieu: *Après le roi. Essai sur l’effondrement de la monarchie espagnole*. Madrid 2010, p. 25.

Indias occidentales donde los conquistadores que aspiraban a la fama y al premio escribieron al rey para que los recompensara.¹⁴ En 1567, Juan de Matienzo recordaba, por ejemplo, para el virreinato del Perú, la importancia de este sistema de recompensa que se fundamentaba en la justicia distributiva: “Como es justo y conviene que los malos sean castigados, así es justo que los reyes premien a los buenos y los que les sirven conforme a sus méritos”.¹⁵ Los documentos producidos en el contexto colonial se reglamentaron a partir de 1528, fecha en que se expidió la primera cédula para el Nuevo Mundo.¹⁶ A lo largo de los años, el aparato legislativo se fue ampliando y detalló quiénes y cómo podían pretender obtener una merced real.¹⁷ La documentación que se conserva ahora en los archivos es voluminosa, compleja y sumamente valiosa.¹⁸

Para obtener una merced real desde el archipiélago filipino, primero, hacía falta entablar en la Audiencia de Manila un proceso administrativo sumamente complejo y largo, el de la información de oficio y parte. El pretendiente empezaba describiendo su recorrido vital, a continuación varios testigos (de oficio y

¹⁴ González Sánchez: *Homo viator*, pp. 79-82 y pp. 123-141; Nino Vallen: *The Conqueror and the Archive: Social Struggles and Practices of Memorialization in Viceregal New Spain*. En: Marjet Derks et al. (eds.). *What's Left Behind. The Lieux de Mémoire of Europe beyond Europe*. Nimega 2015, pp. 26-32.

¹⁵ Juan de Matienzo: *Gobierno del Perú*, libro II, capítulo xxiv, citado por Silvio A. Zavala: *Las instituciones jurídicas en la conquista de América*. Madrid 1935, p. 262.

¹⁶ Zavala: *Las instituciones jurídicas*, p. 283. Esta cédula aparece en Diego de Encinas: *Cedulario Indiano*. Madrid 1945 (primera edición 1596), libro II, pp. 175-177. Luis Miguel Córdoba Ochoa encontró, sin embargo, una de las primeras peticiones, fechada en 1514: la de un eclesiástico que estuvo en Santa María de la Antigua del Darién y en Nombre de Dios en AGI, Patronato, 150, N. 1, R. 1. Ver su artículo: *Movilidad geográfica*, p. 361. Robert Folger encontró por su parte la petición, fechada en 1523, de un conquistador que estuvo en 1515 en la Castilla de Oro en AGI, Patronato, N. 1, R. 2. Folger: *Writing*, p. 28.

¹⁷ *Recopilación de las Leyes de los Reynos de Indias*. Madrid 1681, libro II, título II, ley xxxii. El Consejo de Indias debía preferir para la provisión de cargos a los sujetos “beneméritos y suficientes, que en aquellas partes hubiere, o que en ellas nos hubieren servido, o sirvieren así en pacificar, poblar y ennoblecer la tierra, como en convertir y doctrinar a los naturales de ella, conforme a las leyes de este título de nuestro Patronazgo Real”. *Recopilación de las Leyes*, libro II, título XXXIII, “De las informaciones y pareceres”.

¹⁸ Ver por ejemplo este artículo en el que se estudia las biografías de músicos españoles en el Nuevo Mundo a la luz de esta fuente documental: María Gembero Ustároz: *Migraciones de músicos entre España y América (siglos XVI-XVIII): estudio preliminar*. En: María Gembero Ustároz y Emilio Ros-Fábreas (eds.): *La música y el Atlántico. Relaciones musicales entre España y Latinoamérica*. Granada 2007, pp. 17-58.

parte) avalaban las diferentes etapas de la vida del demandante y, por último, los jueces de la Audiencia elaboraban un *parecer*. En este último documento, que cerraba la información, los jueces de la Audiencia daban su opinión en cuanto a la merced solicitada. Otra fase administrativa, el traslado de la información, suponía el envío del expediente a la Nueva España y luego a la Península. Ya en España, el Consejo de Indias en posesión de la petición del pretendiente la estudiaba y valoraba para, por fin, hacer redactar la relación de méritos que remataba este largo proceso administrativo. El rey que leía este último documento, la relación de méritos – quintaesencia de la vida de un súbdito solicitando la gracia de su soberano – decidía, al final, si otorgaba o no la merced. Así pues, un proceso administrativo semiplanetario se entablaba entre Filipinas y España, y pincelaba, a lo largo de los trámites administrativos, el recorrido vital de los agentes que se habían ido de la Península para asentarse en Asia.

En los expedientes se retratan las vidas de los súbditos, sus andanzas por el mundo, sus hazañas, pero también sus desilusiones o fracasos. Leer las peripecias de los agentes de la Corona que intentaban obtener una merced permite así pues entrometernos en sus vidas, sus formaciones y sus trayectorias profesionales. La lectura de las informaciones de oficio y parte es realmente apasionante, aunque los datos, lo veremos luego, resultan bastante redundantes.¹⁹ En los primeros folios de las informaciones, cuando los pretendientes exponían sus servicios, descubrimos sus primeros años en Europa (formación, servicios brindados a la Corona en la Península, pero muy a menudo también en Flandes o en Italia), luego, cómo y por qué los agentes decidieron emprender un viaje a América y Filipinas, y por fin, ya en el archipiélago, lo que hicieron para servir los intereses del rey en los confines asiáticos.

Los primeros datos de la petición del demandante, registrados por un escribano de la Audiencia de Manila, constituían la versión oficial de la vida del agente. Era el primer documento de la información en el que se plasmaba por escrito su trayectoria vital. Pero es importante recordar que tales documentos se redactaban para obtener una merced. Por lo tanto, resulta bastante fácil imaginar que la exposición de los servicios y los relatos de vida podían aparecer embelle-

¹⁹ Folger: Writing, p. 38. Comenta estas repeticiones y habla de las estructuras tautológicas de los documentos.

cidos, incluso glorificados cuando no erróneos.²⁰ Para paliar este problema, en el marco del proceso administrativo, los testigos de oficio, llamados por la Audiencia, y de parte, solicitados por el pretendiente, debían acreditar la veracidad de los hechos expuestos.²¹ Así los interrogatorios permitían a los jueces de la Audiencia cerciorarse de que eran ciertos los servicios del pretendiente antes de informar al rey.²²

La Audiencia hacía comparecer a los testigos para corroborar, por ejemplo, que un militar había luchado en Flandes y en Filipinas, para asegurarse de que un eclesiástico dominaba la lengua de los indígenas para adoctrinarlos, o para comprobar que un oficial había sido escribano en los reinos de Castilla, así como en el archipiélago. Con tantas informaciones repetidas, raras veces contradictorias (como si el hecho de reiterarlas las convirtiesen en fidedignas²³), el expediente podía alcanzar más de 100 folios. Por lo tanto, el estudio de estas fuentes, sobre todo de los interrogatorios, es un ejercicio que requiere cierto distanciamiento. En 1605 por ejemplo, el tesorero de la Audiencia de Manila, Ventura de Santillán, presentó una información de oficio y parte para que el rey le confirmara en su cargo de tesorero. Un interrogatorio secreto, de oficio, compuesto por trece preguntas había sido establecido por el escribano según la misma exposición de servicios que el pretendiente había expuesto. ¿Sabían los testigos si Ventura Santillán vivía en Manila desde hacía nueve años ya que se había ido de España, quedado un tiempo en las Indias, casado en México, y luego embarcado para Filipinas? ¿Podían certificar que el demandante había sido nombrado

²⁰ Murdo J. MacLeod fue uno de los primeros historiadores en llamar la atención sobre esta fuente documental. La analizó, y subrayó la singularidad de los documentos que calificó de “self-promotion” ya que los pretendientes se vanagloriaban para obtener una merced, a veces incluso de forma poco incongrua: *Self-Promotion: The Relaciones de Méritos y Servicios and their Historical and Political Interpretation*. En: *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 76, no. 1 (1998), p. 28.

²¹ Recopilación, libro II, título XXXIII, ley iiii: “Que se examinen testigos de toda satisfacion, con citacion del Fiscal, y se guarde secreto inviolablemente”.

²² Traslados de las informaciones de oficio y parte de Diego de Marquina Torrubia. 1605. AGI, Filipinas, 60, N. 2, imagen 3. El oidor de la Audiencia de Manila al empezar el proceso administrativo hizo registrar estas palabras: “Conviene conforme a lo que su magestad manda acerca de las Ynformaciones de servicios hazer la de oficio secretamente para que su magestad pueda ser informado de si son ciertos los servicios. Por tanto mando rezevir ynformacion de oficio y que los testigos que uvieren de decir en ella sean interrogados por el interrogatorio [...]”.

²³ Folger: Writing, p. 49.

juez de los Bienes de Difuntos “oficio de mucha calidad e importancia el cual sirvió con mucha aprobación”? ¿Podían confirmar que había luchado “con sus armas y criados” durante el levantamiento de los Sangleyes (los chinos asentados en Manila) en 1603, acudiendo “como bueno y honrado servidor de su magestad”?²⁴ El interrogatorio de oficio en el que se debía guardar “secreto inviolablemente” no tenía, como lo vemos, nada de secreto.²⁵ Aparece más bien como una confirmación de lo ya dicho por los demandantes, lo que nos lleva a analizar los datos con mucha cautela.

A continuación de los interrogatorios y de las declaraciones de los testigos de oficio y de parte, un oidor de la Audiencia redactaba un parecer, en el que se recapitulaba, de forma sintética, pero oficial, el relato de vida del demandante para luego proponer su opinión, o sea su parecer, en cuanto al cargo o la merced solicitada.²⁶ El parecer era en realidad el documento que sellaba en Filipinas el proceso administrativo. En el caso de Ventura Santillán, debido a las buenas relaciones que el demandante mantenía con las autoridades de Manila, el juez propuso que se le confirmara en su puesto de tesorero.²⁷

A partir de estos documentos conservados en las informaciones de oficio y parte, el historiador puede empezar a retratar la vida de un individuo, evaluar su ascenso social, conocer también sus redes, entender sus motivaciones, pero evidentemente tiene que desconfiar en parte de estos relatos embellecidos y sobre todo sumamente artificiales. Primero, porque los relatos de vida se redactaban en el marco de un proceso administrativo muy reglamentado; luego, porque las palabras originales del demandante desaparecían bajo el filtro de la administración (recordemos que el demandante no redactaba el relato de su vida, sino un escribano);²⁸ finalmente, porque estas informaciones de oficio y parte,

²⁴ Traslados de las informaciones de oficio y parte de Ventura de Santillán y Gavilanes. 1605. AGI, Filipinas, 60, N. 3, imágenes 1-5.

²⁵ Recopilación, libro II, título XXXIII, ley iiij.

²⁶ Recopilación, libro II, título XXXIII, ley v. En el parecer los oidores debían apurar “la verdad disponiéndola con grande entereza, brevedad y palabras graves y de substancia, sin preámbulos, ni encarecimientos [...]”.

²⁷ Traslados de las informaciones de oficio y parte de Ventura de Santillán y Gavilanes. 1605. AGI, Filipinas, 60, N. 3, imagen 30.

²⁸ Carolina M. Jurado propone un estudio muy interesante sobre las probanzas de méritos y servicios de los caciques del área andina. Analiza más precisamente las condiciones en las que se redactaron los documentos e insiste en el papel que desempeñaron los escribanos,

tan solo perseguían una meta: que el soberano reconociera los méritos del demandante. Por lo tanto, no son pocas las informaciones de oficio y parte en las que se extremaban las hazañas de un agente, cuando no se falseaban los relatos de vida demasiado gloriosos.²⁹ Al leer, por ejemplo, el retrato que nos pinceló la información de oficio y parte del militar Diego de Marquina Torrubia, podemos ver hasta qué punto se idealizó la figura de dicho militar: servía a la Corona con “diligencia y cuidado”, era un “soldado honrado”, un hombre “de mucha cuenta y razón”, “de mucho crédito y confianza”, y por supuesto “buen cristiano”.³⁰

Hasta ahora hemos visto el proceso administrativo en Filipinas, pero se prolongaba luego en América antes de finalizarse en España. Los oidores de Manila mandaban por la Nao de China al virreinato de la Nueva España las informaciones de oficio y parte más relevantes, para que éstas se transmitieran al Consejo de Indias.³¹ Ya en España, el Consejo de Indias podía estudiar el traslado de la información, y tal vez aprobarla, para hacer redactar la relación de méritos.³² Este documento, el último, coronaba varios años de proceso administrativo. Otra vez, el discurso de vida del demandante cobraba una nueva realidad y materialidad: la relación de méritos, redactada en España, sintetizaba aún

preguntándose qué palabra y memoria indígena se pueden encontrar en esta fuente documental y cómo interpretarla: “Descendientes de los primeros”. Las probanzas de méritos y servicios y la genealogía cacical. Audiencia de Charcas, 1574-1719. En: Revista de Indias, vol. LXXIV, no. 261 (2014), pp. 387-422.

²⁹ Ver el artículo de Thomas Hillerkuss que estudió el expediente de Hernán Gómez de Ribera en el que el pretendiente quería manipular la verdad para obtener una merced: La información de servicios y méritos de Hernán Gómez de Ribera, vecino de Guadalajara en el siglo XVI. Un ejemplo de la insensatez y torpeza. En: Letras Históricas, no. 7 (2013), pp. 193-213.

³⁰ Traslados de las informaciones de oficio y parte Diego de Marquina Torrubia. 1605. AGI, Filipinas, 60, N. 2, imagen 12.

³¹ Rodolfo Aguirre Salvador subraya que la Corona española delegó a su administración en las Indias la responsabilidad de seleccionar los expedientes de los pretendientes más beneméritos. Ver su libro: El mérito y la estrategia. Clérigos, juristas y médicos en Nueva España. México 2003, p. 33.

³² Gregori Roig: Representación, p. 362. Las redactaban los secretarios o escribanos – *relatores* – del Consejo de Indias. Sin embargo a partir de finales del siglo XVII y principios del siglo XVIII, los pretendientes hacían redactar su relación de méritos al solicitar los servicios de los oficiales del Consejo a cambio de una remuneración.

más la trayectoria vital del demandante.³³ A partir de ella, los funcionarios del Consejo de Indias podían transmitir la petición del pretendiente al rey, ya que solo el soberano decidía si otorgaba o no la merced.³⁴

A la hora de estudiar este tipo de documentación, se debe tener en cuenta la realidad compleja en la que se redactaron: un contexto imperial, colonial y administrativo, en el que las distancias desempeñaron un papel importante. En general, la vida del demandante aparecía como ejemplar, ya que en la relación de méritos el discurso de vida se convertía en un relato de vida, oficial e impersonal.³⁵ Se trataba de adaptar el discurso al de la Monarquía hispánica que se pretendía universal y planetaria.³⁶ El filólogo Robert Folger se interesó por ejemplo en estos documentos y los comparó con currículos de la Edad moderna. Estudió la petición de Miguel de Cervantes con la que deseaba obtener el cargo de contador de las galeras en Cartagena de Indias, e insistió en el aspecto artificial de tal fuente de información para conocer al demandante.³⁷ Subrayó primero que no reflejaba de manera fidedigna la vida del pretendiente, pues no se redactada de forma personal, e insistió, segundo, en su dimensión ideológica, ya que el documento debía ofrecer la imagen de un súbdito perfecto, y no de un individuo con sus singularidades.³⁸ La relación de méritos se adaptaba al discurso imperante, a las normas, y sobre todo a la ideología de la época. Así en la petición de Cervantes, los talentos literarios del escritor no aparecían mencio-

³³ A partir de mediados del siglo XVII, las relaciones de méritos podían ser impresas. Sobre las relaciones de méritos, ver el artículo de Luis Lira Montt: *Las relaciones de méritos y servicios de los americanos y su valor probatorio de nobleza*. En: *Estudios Genealógicos Heráldicos y Nobiliarios – Revista Hidalguía* 1 (1978), pp. 465-477.

³⁴ Dedieu: *Après le roi*, p. 25.

³⁵ Folger: *Writing*, p. 34. “The text of the relación de méritos y servicios creates the fiction that the audiencia and all the oficiales acted according to the law, strategically obeying the order prescribed by the law”.

³⁶ Michel Bertrand: *Introduction*. En: Michel Bertrand (ed.): *Écrire l’histoire de l’Amérique latine. XIX^e–XX^e siècles*. Paris 2001, p. 10. Subraya que durante la colonización en América, la escritura de la historia se hacía con el constante cuidado de la imagen que quería remitir la Monarquía. Lo podemos comprobar en las relaciones de méritos que participaban de la construcción de la Monarquía y de su historia futura: los documentos probatorios se adaptaron a las exigencias de la Monarquía y a la imagen que ella quería transmitir.

³⁷ Robert Folger: “Es benemérito para cualquier oficio”: Cervantes interpelado. En: Christoph Strosetzki (ed.): *Visiones y revisiones cervantinas*. Alcalá de Henares 2011, pp. 353-362.

³⁸ Folger: *Writing*, p. 39.

gados. Su dedicación artística no interesaba en aquella época a la Monarquía, pero sí sus servicios como soldado ejemplar. Este tipo de documentación ofrece, así pues, la posibilidad de retratar las trayectorias vitales de los agentes de la Corona, en su vertiente oficial, casi perfecta, sacrificándose el súbdito por su Dios y su rey. Es cierto que los expedientes nos remiten, por lo tanto, una imagen modificada por el filtro del proceso administrativo, una imagen también alterada por unas omisiones o incluso mentiras por el anhelo de obtener una merced.³⁹ A pesar de todo ello, como hemos dicho, las informaciones de oficio y las relaciones de méritos permiten entender cómo se elaboraron los discursos individuales en un contexto imperial.⁴⁰

LOS AGENTES DE LA CORONA EN FILIPINAS: DISCURSOS DE VIDA E ITINERARIOS SEMIPLANETARIOS

El análisis del corpus seleccionado nos va a servir para ilustrar la movilidad de los agentes, a través de sus discursos, y reflexionar sobre las interacciones entre la Península y Asia. Hemos seleccionado a veinte agentes deseosos de ver sus méritos reconocidos y hemos examinado sus expedientes, ya sean informaciones de oficio y parte o relaciones de méritos. Entre los veinte individuos seleccionados, nueve eran militares, seis ocupaban un cargo oficial en la Audiencia, tres eran eclesiásticos y dos navegantes (un capitán⁴¹ y un piloto). El hecho de categorizar a los individuos en función de su oficio resultó bastante difícil; un militar podía por ejemplo acabar su vida intentando obtener un cargo administrativo. Fue el caso de Diego de Marquina Torrubia, quien se embarcó para Filipinas en 1580 como soldado para “pacificar” las islas con el gobernador don Gonzalo Ronquillo, participó también en numerosas jornadas militares en

³⁹ MacLeod: Self-Promotion.

⁴⁰ Ver por ejemplo el breve estudio sobre Francisco Arias de Herrera, un agente de la Corona cuya trayectoria vital fue global. Roxana Nakashima y Lía Guillermina Oliveto: Las informaciones de méritos y servicios y el imperio global de Felipe II a través de la trayectoria de Francisco Arias de Herrera. En: *Revista Electrónica de Fuentes y Archivos*, no. 5, Córdoba-Argentina (2014), pp. 120-128.

⁴¹ Relación de méritos de Melchor Hasse. 1623. AGI, Indiferente, 111, N. 41. Este capitán estuvo en varios territorios españoles y portugueses (Cartagena de Indias, Angola, Brasil, Santo Domingo), sin embargo nunca estuvo en Filipinas, pero sí su barco requisicionado por la Corona para formar parte de una expedición destinada al archipiélago en 1617.

Filipinas, en Siam, en Patán y en Brunéi, pero decidió acabar su carrera bélica de forma más pacífica siendo depositario general de la Audiencia de Manila.⁴² Podemos también mencionar otro caso, más sorprendente, el de Cristóbal Ramírez de Cartagena,⁴³ un militar que se embarcó en 1591 para Filipinas, que participó en la represión de los indios Zambales,⁴⁴ acompañó también a Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas para intentar recuperar Ternate en 1593, pero algunos años después, en 1595, decidió abandonar las armas para hacerse eclesiástico (siguiendo la trayectoria vital de su tío, que fue deán de la Catedral de Manila).⁴⁵ Dato anecdótico pero interesante, Cristóbal Ramírez de Cartagena tuvo que presentarse a Malaca para ordenarse sacerdote, ya que en aquella época el obispo de Manila, Domingo de Salazar, había muerto y tan sólo en los reinos portugueses de Asia le podían ordenar. Ya sacerdote, Cristóbal Ramírez de Cartagena ofició durante más de veinte años, adoctrinó a las poblaciones autóctonas recién convertidas y luego fue capellán de la cárcel de la Audiencia de Manila.⁴⁶

Como vemos, clasificar a los demandantes en función de su oficio puede resultar bastante artificial (ya que el método silencia la evolución de las carreras), pero a pesar de todo, permite destacar quiénes eran los que podían solicitar una merced. La mayoría de los pretendientes formaban parte de las élites de Filipinas y el grupo más importante lo conformaban los militares, seguidos por los oficiales reales (letrados – como abogados y jueces –, escribanos y tesoro-

⁴² Traslados de las informaciones de oficio y parte de Diego de Marquina Torrubia. 1605. AGI, Filipinas, 60, N. 2.

⁴³ Traslados de las informaciones de oficio y parte de Cristóbal Ramírez de Cartagena. 1611. AGI, Filipinas, 60, N. 13.

⁴⁴ Sobre las revueltas indígenas, ver por ejemplo Clotilde Jacqueland: *De Séville à Manille. Les Espagnols en mer de Chine*. Paris 2015, p. 246 y el artículo de Manel Ollé: *Interacción y conflicto en el Parián de Manila*. En: *Illes i Imperis*, no. 10-11 (2008), pp. 61-90.

⁴⁵ El expediente de su tío, Juan de Vivero, aparece de hecho en el suyo, ya que el mencionar a los familiares beneméritos formaba parte también de las estrategias para obtener una merced. AGI, Filipinas, 60, N. 13, Traslados de las informaciones de oficio y parte, Juan de Vivero, deán de la catedral de Manila, 1570.

⁴⁶ Traslados de las informaciones de oficio y parte de Cristóbal Ramírez de Cartagena. 1611. AGI, Filipinas, 60, N. 13, imagen 232. En el parecer de los oidores de la Audiencia podemos leer: “Por no haber Ovispo en estas yslas se fue a ordenar a Malaca donde se ordenó de misa y buelto a ellas [las Filipinas] sirvió dos años en el curato de Jaro con buen exemplo y aprovechamiento de los naturales”.

ros), por los eclesiásticos y, por último, los navegantes. A saber, los cuatro grupos profesionales que participaron de manera decisiva en la colonización de las islas Filipinas. Todos estos demandantes no formaban parte de la nobleza española, pero lo deseaban. Como en el Nuevo Mundo, su vida dedicada al servicio de la Corona en Filipinas era un argumento fundamental a la hora de presentar sus méritos. Su labor en estos lejanos territorios asiáticos podía tener peso, casi tanto como un linaje bien establecido en España. Las conquistas de las almas y la defensa del archipiélago contra los holandeses, los “indios rebeldes” o los piratas chinos o musulmanes aparecían en sus peticiones como hazañas. Además, la lejanía de Filipinas y los peligros, tanto militares como religiosos (por parte de los protestantes o de los musulmanes), hacían que el rey se mostrara sensible a cuatro argumentos: la movilidad geográfica, la defensa militar del archipiélago, las habilidades para gestionar la Audiencia y el dominio de los idiomas indígenas.

El primer argumento, la movilidad geográfica, aparece en todos los documentos consultados como una característica decisiva. Al leer tanto las informaciones de oficio como las relaciones de méritos nos damos cuenta de que los demandantes detallaban cada territorio en los que habían estado. Los espacios geográficos registrados en los expedientes mencionan muchas partes del planeta: los territorios de la Monarquía española, pero también los de la Monarquía portuguesa. Los demandantes habían vivido y se habían desplazado en Europa: desde Castilla a Canarias, Flandes o Nápoles. Luego, después de cruzar el Atlántico, se habían asentado en el Caribe, en Nueva Granada o en Nueva España, para, por fin, embarcarse en el Galeón de Manila y llegar a Filipinas. Otros se habían desplazado por el mundo pasando por Brasil, Angola, las Malucas, la India, Macao o bien China y Japón. Todos estos territorios, ya fueran españoles o portugueses, aparecen mencionados en los veinte expedientes que hemos podido consultar. ¿Qué significa? Tan solo una veintena de hombres habían recorrido estas tierras y sobre todo habían conseguido tejer vínculos burocráticos, militares, religiosos o comerciales a través del mundo. El monarca que leía las relaciones de méritos entendía la importancia de la movilidad de sus agentes para mantener en orden sus territorios fragmentados en las diferentes partes del orbe terrestre. Por lo menos, los demandantes estaban convencidos de que estos datos iban a ser decisivos. En sus estrategias discursivas, sus andanzas planetarias eran un argumento de peso.

Francisco López de Tamayo, por ejemplo, sirvió a la Corona en Canarias, en la isla Española, en Nueva Granada, en Nueva España y por fin en Filipinas. En su demanda, Francisco López de Tamayo deseaba que el Rey midiese la importancia de su recorrido a través de los territorios de la Monarquía; quería que se diese cuenta de que había dedicado su vida entera al servicio real a través de medio mundo. Su estrategia discursiva consistía en presentarse como fiel servidor de la Corona, tanto por los años que había dedicado a servirla (35 años) como por la diversidad de los territorios en los que había estado: las tres partes del mundo bajo dominación española (Europa, América y Asia). El oficial Antonio de Viana decidió también subrayar en su petición sus andanzas por el mundo.⁴⁷ Si bien es cierto que contó muy pocas cosas acerca de su vida en España, sin embargo, mencionó lo servicios brindados en Filipinas, así como en la “India de Portugal”.⁴⁸ Allí en 1619, vendió clavo de las Malucas que había ido a comprar en Ternate⁴⁹ con el fin de adquirir armas y pertrechos.⁵⁰ Después

⁴⁷ Relación de méritos de Antonio de Viana. 1630. AGI, Indiferente, 111, N. 99, imagen 1: “Le nombró [el gobernador] y le dio título de Capitán, y cabo, y maestro de un navío que embió a la India de Portugal con el clavo, que por cuenta de V. Magestad se avía traído de Terrenate, y le nombró por administrador del dicho clavo para que lo vendiesse, y de su procedido truxesse los pertrechos y municiones necesarias para el campo de Manila, lo qual hizo con mucha puntualidad y cuidado”.

⁴⁸ Sobre las dos coronas ibéricas que oscilaron entre periodos conflictivos y de alianza en función de sus intereses respectivos, ver Carlos Martínez Shaw: Presentación. En: Carlos Martínez Shaw y José Antonio Martínez Torres (eds.): España y Portugal en el mundo (1581-1668). Madrid 2014, p. 14.

⁴⁹ Jean-Noël Sánchez Pons subraya que los portugueses no consiguieron controlar la totalidad de los circuitos de redistribución del clavo. Ver su artículo: “Clavados con el clavo”. Debates españoles sobre el comercio de las especias asiáticas en los siglos XVI y XVII. En: Salvador Bernabéu Albert y Carlos Martínez Shaw (eds.): Un océano de seda y plata. El universo económico del Galeón de Manila. Sevilla 2013, p. 114.

⁵⁰ A través de su relato de vida podemos ver los vínculos comerciales que se establecieron entre la Corona de Castilla en Asia y la de Portugal. Como lo recordó Serge Gruzinski, las perspectivas lucrativas en Asia eran inmensas a pesar de las restricciones comerciales. Gruzinski: *L'aigle et le dragon*, p. 64. Ver también, Manel Ollé: *Entre China y la Especería*. En: España y Portugal, pp. 374-375. Recuerda que los castellanos y los portugueses en Asia, ante las amenazas y los peligros holandeses, fueron sucesivamente aliados y enemigos. De hecho, los intercambios comerciales entre castellanos y portugueses en la India demuestran una cooperación más allá de la unión de las coronas, ya que, en principio, los castellanos no podían entrometerse en el hemisferio portugués en materia de comercio. Ver también este texto que aboga por el hecho de no separar de forma sistemática el estudio del imperio español y del imperio portugués: Bénat-Tachot y Gruzinski: Prologue. En: Louise Bénat-

de su vivencia en Asia, Antonio de Viana sirvió también a la Corona en América, donde fue contador en Acapulco, ayudando, decía, con sus “advertencias muy útiles a la Real hacienda”.⁵¹ Su experiencia asiática aparece, así pues, en su petición, como un argumento distintivo: el haber servido en los diferentes territorios, y aún más en Asia, representaba una ventaja para la administración real esparcida por la Península, América y Filipinas.⁵²

Subrayar una movilidad en los territorios españoles de Asia y de América ofrecía a los pretendientes la posibilidad de retratarse como agentes transnacionales y experimentados, por lo tanto, beneméritos. Un tercer pretendiente, el militar Lorenzo Bravo de Cuéllar, adoptó la misma estrategia e insistió en su movilidad (España, América, pero Asia sobre todo: Japón, Filipinas, Malucas y Macao).⁵³ En su petición, detalló su penosa navegación por el Pacífico (hasta Japón, antes de llegar a Manila),⁵⁴ sus combates con los holandeses y su presencia en la armada, que había viajado a Macao en 1628. Así pues, en 1630, cuando expuso sus méritos, Lorenzo Bravo de Cuéllar había recorrido medio mundo y participado en la defensa militar de los territorios españoles durante más de 11 años y 158 días.⁵⁵ En los documentos que hizo redactar, sus andanzas por el

Tachot, Serge Gruzinski y Boris Jeanne (eds.): *Les processus d'américanisation*. Paris 2012, T. I, p. 11.

⁵¹ Relación de méritos de Antonio de Viana. 1630. AGI, Indiferente, 111, N. 99, imagen 2.

⁵² Sobre las experiencias de los súbditos en los diferentes territorios de la Monarquía hispánica y el conocimiento, sobre todo militar, que adquirieron ver: Domingo Centenero de Arce: *¿Una monarquía de lazos débiles? Circulación y experiencia como formas de construcción de la Monarquía Católica*. En: Juan Francisco Pardo Molero y Manuel Lomas Cortés (eds.): *Oficiales reales. Los ministros de la Monarquía Católica*. Valencia 2012, pp. 137-161.

⁵³ Relación de méritos de Lorenzo Bravo de Cuéllar. 1634. AGI, Indiferente, 111, N. 152, imágenes 1-4.

⁵⁴ Se había embarcado, en 1618, en el Galeón de Manila sin llegar directamente al Cavite sino a Japón (por una fuerte tempestad que les obligó a anclar en las costas japonesas en vez de llegar a Filipinas). El encuentro con la población hostil le ofreció la posibilidad de ilustrarse, pues consiguió salvar la hacienda del rey y la de los particulares, según contó. *Ibidem*, imagen 1. “En esta ocasión acudió muy puntualmente a todo lo que se ofreció del Real Servicio arriesgando su persona”.

⁵⁵ Lorenzo Bravo de Cuéllar, solicitando su merced, no dudó en volver a cruzar el Pacífico y Atlántico para presentarse en la Corte de Madrid y pedir la merced que tanto deseaba obtener. Tiempo perdido, ya que en 1634, cuando por fin se redactó su relación de méritos en España, estaba de nuevo en Filipinas y, cinco años más tarde, a pesar de que el rey había despachado una cédula que le concedía una “renta de indios” de 300 ducados, nada se había concretizado. Dedieu señala que la corte nunca consiguió deshacerse de estos pretendientes,

planeta con miras a defender la Monarquía aparecen como un elemento estructurante de su discurso para obtener una merced real.

El estudio de las informaciones de oficio y relaciones de méritos lo evidencia: la circulación de los hombres por el mundo, sus habilidades para desplazarse en el hemisferio español como portugués de Asia constituían elementos cruciales a la hora de solicitar una merced real. Lo ilustra perfectamente el piloto, Mateo Pérez de Lamadrid, que recorrió tres espacios oceánicos, el Atlántico, el Pacífico, el Índico, y además el mar de China, hasta Formosa.⁵⁶ Los agentes españoles, como este piloto, realizaban su movilidad, ya que sabían que representaba una cualidad importante. Insistían al dirigirse al rey en su compromiso fuera de las fronteras europeas y le recordaban que, gracias a sus acciones en estas lejanas tierras asiáticas, colaboraban en la articulación de los territorios de esta Monarquía que se pretendía planetaria e universal. Evidentemente para ellos, la movilidad geográfica implicaba como consecuencia una movilidad social. El hecho de representarse como un agente móvil por el mundo (a imagen y semejanza de lo que anhelaba la Corona española) significaba intentar obtener un reconocimiento por parte del rey, una merced, y, por lo tanto, la posibilidad de ascender a nivel social.

El segundo argumento que aparece de forma recurrente en los documentos es el de las hazañas militares como era también el caso en las peticiones de merced que se redactaban en España o en América. Empero, en Filipinas el espacio era diferente y sumamente conflictivo (protestantes y musulmanes asaltaban el archipiélago, portugueses y chinos eran ora aliados ora enemigos). Tierras fronterizas por antonomasia y escenario de múltiples conflictos armados, allí la defensa de los intereses de la Monarquía (territoriales, comerciales y religiosos), era un hecho que los demandantes ponían de relieve con plétora de detalles. Gracias a los actos individuales de valentía, la Monarquía podía aspirar a crear una cohesión de sus territorios en Asia, aunque de manera débil, debemos

que cada vez eran más números: *Après le roi*, p. 10. John F. Chuchiak en su trabajo sobre la península de Yucatán en el siglo XVII, menciona que unos cien pretendientes se fueron a la corte para hacer valer sus méritos y más de 700 delegaron a un representante para defender sus intereses: *Toward a Regional Definition of Idolatry: Reexamining Idolatry Trials in the Relaciones de Méritos and their Role in Defining the Concept of Idolatria in Colonial Yucatán, 1570–1780*. En: *Journal of Early Modern History* 6, no. 2 (2002), pp. 140–167.

⁵⁶ Relación de méritos de Mateo Pérez de Lamadrid. 1628. AGI, Indiferente, 161, N. 109.

reconocerlo.⁵⁷ Por ello, para los agentes españoles el haber combatido en Filipinas, en Malucas, en el estrecho de Malaca (en aquella época un territorio que formaba parte del imperio portugués⁵⁸) o en Formosa, constituía un aspecto decisivo en sus peticiones. A lo largo del siglo XVII, el enemigo de la Corona española en Asia tuvo diferentes caras. Piratas chinos, piratas musulmanes, indios “rebeldes”, Sangleyes, pero sobre todo holandeses. El sargento mayor, Pedro Jaraquemada, combatió, por ejemplo, a los holandeses en tres ocasiones diferentes: en 1611 en Ternate, en 1616 en el presidio de la provincia de Otón (donde quedó herido de un mosquetazo), pero también en 1630 en el presidio de Formosa.⁵⁹ Sus hechos de armas, durante más de treinta años, combatiendo a los holandeses, el enemigo político y religioso, eran una prueba inequívoca de su leal compromiso.

En el marco de las hazañas militares, la fuerza empleada en tales situaciones era además un argumento invocado para demostrar la completa dedicación de los agentes a la Corona. La documentación que hemos podido consultar sobre Hernando del Castillo lo demuestra.⁶⁰ Como muchos otros militares, Hernando del Castillo había luchado contra los holandeses en 1605 para recuperar las Malucas, pero su figura destacó, sobre todo, por sus hazañas militares sumamente violentas.⁶¹ Su información de oficio y parte es asombrosa. Este militar había combatido en muchísimas partes de Asia hasta en Malasia y en el estrecho de Malaca. Sus méritos, al leer los documentos, destacaban principalmente por la ferocidad que empleó y que supo recalcar en su petición. En su información de oficio y parte, no solo aparecen mencionados los múltiples combates contra los holandeses,⁶² su papel, además, como embajador en Borneo, sino que

⁵⁷ Domingo Centenero de Arce: ¿Una monarquía de lazos débiles?

⁵⁸ Ollé: *Entre China*, pp. 372-374.

⁵⁹ Traslados de informaciones de oficio y parte de Pedro Jaraquemada. 1640. AGI, Filipinas, 61, N. 19.

⁶⁰ Traslados de las informaciones de oficio y parte de Hernando del Castillo. 1644. AGI, Filipinas, 61, N. 22, imágenes 4-9. La relación de méritos impresa aparece en su expediente.

⁶¹ Jacquelard: *De Séville à Manille*, p. 259. Recuerda que a partir de 1605 la reconquista de las Molucas en Manila se reactivó con las tropas de socorro de Nueva España y que los españoles consiguieron apoderarse de Ternate en 1606.

⁶² Traslados de las informaciones de oficio y parte de Hernando del Castillo. 1644. AGI, Filipinas, 61, N. 22, imagen 6. En 1617, luchó contra los holandeses, y en su petición leemos que: “en la sangrienta batalla que tuvo con diez Galeones de enemigos, peleó valerosamente”.

también la manera cómo “pacificó” varias islas calificadas de “rebeldes”: una manera de combatir violenta, ya que, según su petición, “se señoreó de la tierra, quemándoles a los Taffures ocho pueblos”.⁶³

Así pues, mencionar la fuerza en tales circunstancias podía también formar parte de las estrategias discursivas para intentar obtener una promoción.⁶⁴ Del mismo modo, el militar Francisco Figueroa se ilustró por combatir a los Turcos en Nápoles, pero también por pelear y someter a los indígenas de Filipinas. En su relación de méritos aparece bien claro cómo quemó pueblos y campos, decapitó a nativos – calificados de rebeldes – y cautivó a otros: “degollando, matando y cautivando a muchas personas”.⁶⁵ No solo recurrió a la violencia con los indígenas del archipiélago, sino también con los Sangleyes cuando se levantaron en la ciudad de Manila. Poner de realce los hechos de armas, la valentía ante el enemigo holandés o la crueldad con los autóctonos que no se habían convertido al catolicismo (filipinos paganos y musulmanes o chinos), era un procedimiento usual. De esta manera, el pretendiente ofrecía al rey la imagen de un soldado experimentado,⁶⁶ valiente,⁶⁷ vehemente, a menudo herido (Lorenzo Bravo de Cuéllar mencionó, por ejemplo, su herida en una pierna y su rostro

⁶³ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁴ Acerca de la violencia como argumento para obtener una promoción social y para consolidar el poder real ver, José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez: *Les acteurs de l'hégémonie hispanique, du monde à la péninsule Ibérique*. En: *Annales* 69, no. 4 (2014), y más precisamente pp. 930-936. Ver también del mismo autor y de Gaetano Sabatini: *Monarchy as Conquest: Violence, Social Opportunity, and Political Stability in the Establishment of the Hispanic Monarchy*. En: *The Journal of Modern History* 81, no. 3 (2009), pp. 501-536.

⁶⁵ Relación de méritos de Francisco Figueroa. 1646. AGI, Indiferente, 113, N. 6, imagen 3. Figueroa subrayó que todas estas acciones las llevó a cabo: “con muy poco gasto de la Real Hazienda y mucho suyo”.

⁶⁶ Sobre Filipinas como espacio fronterizo y sobre los militares españoles que lucharon contra los holandeses o las poblaciones indígenas musulmanas, ver Miguel Luque Talaván: *En las fronteras de lo lícito: vida privada y conductas de los militares destacados en el suroeste de las islas Filipinas. Siglos XVII-XVIII*. En: Marta María Manchado López y Miguel Luque Talaván (eds.): *Fronteras del mundo hispánico. Filipinas en el contexto de las regiones liminares novohispanas*. Córdoba 2011, pp. 165-190.

⁶⁷ Folger: *Writing*, p. 39. Señala que “colonial bureaucracy forced – or better, invited – Spaniards in the Colonies to scrutinize their personal memories and filter out those aspects of their biographies which presents them as exemplary soldiers [...]”. Ver también sobre los militares españoles a través del mundo conformando una élite interterritorial, Córdoba Ochoa: *Movilidad geográfica*, p. 359.

marcado por un flechazo),⁶⁸ pero siempre combativo y al servicio de la Corona y de Dios.

Prosigamos con el tercer argumento. Además de la movilidad geográfica, de las hazañas militares, se recurría muy a menudo a la formación universitaria y al dominio de la escritura y de las cifras. Saber leer y escribir para ocupar cargos en la Audiencia de Manila representaba una ventaja evidente, tener una formación en una universidad aún más. Los demandantes insistían primero en el tiempo y el dinero que habían gastado en sus estudios. Luis Ortiz de Padilla, escribano de la Audiencia, mencionó el tiempo que había dedicado a formarse en la universidad de Salamanca, pero también en la de Alcalá.⁶⁹ Se consideraba como una persona instruida que había invertido mucho dinero en su formación, para luego ocupar su cargo en Filipinas, con un sueldo, a su juicio, poco elevado debido a la carestía de la vida en Manila.⁷⁰ Cuando se lee su petición, las esperanzas frustradas, la desilusión y el anhelo de verse recompensado por tantos sacrificios se evidencian de forma patente. Otro oficial, el procurador Rodrigo Díaz Guiral (uno de los primeros letrados en haber llegado a Filipinas en 1598) dejó bien claro en su petición su formación (era licenciado) y los diferentes cargos ocupados a lo largo de los años: abogado y luego asesor del gobernador por “sus buenas partes, letras, y buen consejo”.⁷¹ El tesorero Francisco López Tamayo, también, puso de realce sus habilidades en materia de gestión administrativa y dominio de la escritura; se presentó en su información como un experto “en materia de quenta y papeles.”⁷² Y es cierto que el uso de la escritura permitió a la Monarquía hispánica, a pesar de las distancias, mantener su administración real. El historiador Fernando Bouza Álvarez lo recalca perfectamente cuando dice que “gobernar era cosa que, llegado el siglo XVII, no

⁶⁸ Relación de méritos de Lorenzo Bravo de Cuéllar. 1634. AGI, Indiferente, 111, N. 152, imágenes 1-2. Leemos: “siendo uno de los soldados que más se señalaron como honrado y baliente soldado y salió herido de un mosquetazo en la pierna derecha de que está estropeado y herido” y también: “salió herido de un flechazo en la cara junto a la nariz”.

⁶⁹ Traslados de las informaciones de oficio y parte de Luis Ortiz de Padilla. 1598. AGI, Filipinas, 59, N. 38, imagen 3.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, imagen 4.

⁷¹ Traslados de las informaciones de oficio y parte de Rodrigo Díaz Guiral. 1615. AGI, Filipinas, 60, N. 19, imagen 50.

⁷² Traslados de las informaciones de oficio y parte de Francisco López Tamayo. 1616. AGI, Filipinas, 60, N. 21, imagen 9.

podía hacerse ya sin papeles”.⁷³ Los hombres de aquella época, formados en la universidad, que manejaban la pluma y las cuentas, sabían que podían utilizar este argumento a la hora de solicitar una merced. La Monarquía hispánica, burocrática, necesitaba continuamente a agentes con habilidades de este tipo, y, aún más, móviles por el planeta, para mantener así, a pesar de las distancias, los vínculos administrativos y políticos con la Península.

Por último, el cuarto argumento invocado por los demandantes, en su mayoría eclesiásticos, era el dominio de los idiomas. Diego de León, que deseaba ser deán de la catedral de Manila, señalaba por ejemplo en su información de oficio y parte que era un experto en gramática y latín, pero sobre todo que dominaba el idioma tagalo de los indígenas.⁷⁴ El obispo redactó de hecho una certificación para apoyar a Diego de León, en la que resaltaba que era benemérito, ya que sabía “la lengua de los indios cosa que tanto importa”.⁷⁵

Estas cuatro estrategias discursivas a las que recurrieron los demandantes – aunque no son las únicas⁷⁶ – fueron imprescindibles para asentar la dominación española en América y Filipinas: la movilidad, la fuerza militar, la administración real y el adoctrinamiento religioso. De este modo, los agentes de la Corona esparcidos por el mundo crearon un entramado burocrático, militar, religioso y mercante. La fragmentación territorial de la Monarquía hispánica requería la presencia de oficiales en los diferentes territorios para ocuparlos, defenderlos y unificarlos. Los pretendientes se representaban, así pues, en sus peticiones al rey, como súbditos perfectos, valientes, plenamente dedicados a la Corona donde fuese necesario, y por consiguiente, como individuos expertos y móviles por los diferentes territorios. Indudablemente, fue la circulación de los hombres y de las informaciones lo que constituyó los cimientos de esta monarquía compuesta, pero de alcance global. Las trayectorias vitales de los súbditos, flujos incesantes de individuos desde la Península hasta las Filipinas,

⁷³ Fernando Bouza Álvarez: *Escritura, propaganda y despacho de gobierno*. En: Antonio Castillo Gómez (ed.): *Escribir y leer en el siglo de Cervantes*. Barcelona 1999, p. 97.

⁷⁴ *Traslados de las informaciones de oficio y parte de Diego de León*. 1617. AGI, Filipinas, 60, N. 17, imagen 2.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, imagen 15: “[...] por ser su vida ejemplar [...] y saber también la lengua de los indios cosa que tanto importa”.

⁷⁶ Solían los pretendientes insistir en sus lazos familiares y en el pasado glorioso de sus antepasados, solían también, sobre todo en el caso de los eclesiásticos, subrayar su vida ejemplar como buen cristiano.

pero también la circulación de sus escritos, flujos incesantes de papeles en los que se retrataba su historia y la de la Monarquía, lo demuestran.⁷⁷ Tanto las vidas de los súbditos como sus peticiones de merced se insertaron así en el cuerpo político de la Monarquía:⁷⁸ sus relatos de vida, estandarizados, se adaptaron a la ideología imperante de aquella época y correspondieron de esta manera a las expectativas de su soberano y de su monarquía.⁷⁹ En sus peticiones, los agentes recordaban al monarca que sus acciones individuales formaban parte de un todo: una monarquía católica e hispánica que se pretendía universal y que intentaba imponerse en el planeta a pesar de su carácter fragmentado.⁸⁰ Así lo subrayó José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez cuando escribió “la historia de la monarquía es la de sus actores”, y cuando insistió en el hecho de que algunos de ellos se habían apoderado de los discursos globales.⁸¹ Estudiar estos relatos de vida *multiplicados*⁸² ofrece nuevas perspectivas de investigación que quiero llevar a cabo. A pequeñas pinceladas, el retrato de la Corona podrá

⁷⁷ Serge Gruzinski: *Les quatre parties du monde. Histoire d'une mondialisation*. Paris 2004, p. 106. Señala que la circulación de los hombres por los diferentes continentes permitió tejer vínculos y favoreció la transmisión de informaciones a escala global. Córdoba Ochoa subraya, por su parte, la importancia de la movilidad de los militares en Europa, América y Filipinas, lo que permitió ofrecer nuevas fuentes de información a la corte. *Movilidad geográfica*, p. 374.

⁷⁸ Ver para la Nueva España y las peticiones de los conquistadores: Vallen: *The Conqueror*, p. 32 y María del Carmen Martínez Martínez: *Conquistadores en la corte: méritos, peticiones y mercedes*. En: Eric Roulet (ed.): *Conquistadors, négriers et inquisiteurs*. Paris 2018, pp. 65-74.

⁷⁹ Como lo subraya Jurado en su artículo, “Descendientes de los primeros”, los discursos eran codificados. Si no ofrecían un testimonio objetivo de la historia de un grupo (étnico o social), revelaban la interpretación histórica de los que los elaboraron querían ofrecer al monarca. Es interesante hacer notar que otros discursos, como los relatos, cumplían con las mismas metas, como muestran varias de las contribuciones en este volumen.

⁸⁰ Los discursos individuales al adoptar el discurso universalista de la Monarquía legitimaban de esta manera el poder hegemónico que pretendía asentar la Corona española a través del mundo. Ver sobre la dimensión universalista de los imperios, el apartado “ideologías y discursos universalistas” del libro de Bernd Hausberger: *La globalización temprana*. México 2018, p. 61-63.

⁸¹ Ruiz Ibáñez: *Les acteurs*, p. 954.

⁸² La fuente documental aparece como un palimpsesto, ya que para un solo agente varios relatos de vida se superponían: el suyo dictado al escribano de la Audiencia, el que ofrecían los testigos, el del *parecer* y por fin el de la *relación de méritos*.

cobrar una nueva realidad a través de sus agentes que intentaban tejer un nuevo orden global en el archipiélago.⁸³ Como lo subrayaba el historiador Pierre Chaunu, las Filipinas “*sont sensibles aux grands tournants de l’histoire*”.⁸⁴

⁸³ Gérard Le Bouédec sugiere que, a pequeña escala, el juego de los actores puede revelarse muy interesante a la hora de estudiar los encuentros. Ver: Introduction. En: Gérard Le Bouédec (ed.): *L’Asie, la mer, le monde au temps des Compagnies des Indes*. Rennes 2014, pp. 7-17. Miles Obregon llevó a cabo un estudio de este tipo sobre los ingleses y el Imperio Británico por el mundo. Ver su libro: *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550–1800*. Cambridge 2008. Sanjay Subrahmanyam adoptó también el mismo tipo de método y análisis en su libro: *Three Ways to be an Alien: Travails and Encounters in the Early Modern World*. Waltham 2011.

⁸⁴ Pierre Chaunu: *Manille et Macao, face à la conjoncture des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles*. En: *Annales* 17, no. 3 (1962), p. 559.

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AGATA BLOCH

Portraying Womanhood in the Portuguese Atlantic*

INTRODUCTION

In 1805, a treatise was published in Porto, entitled *Apologia das mulheres*. Written by the French poet and literary critic Antoine Léonard Thomas (1732–1785), the text was about gender inequalities, women’s subordination to men and the authorities, and conflict between the image of women created by society and the reality they faced. Thomas argued that women around the world were deprived of the possibility of social promotion and vertical mobility. The problem here was not only limitations resulting from the patriarchal system but also existing legal system themselves, which prevented them from participating in many social processes. Unfortunately, his criticism of gender equality did not simultaneously imply that he assumed equality between men and women. Even the words Thomas employed were quite contradictory because, on the one hand, he criticized the system that oppressed women while, on the other hand, he himself did not see them as full members of society, “since they do not work, nor ever fight for the Fatherland, they do not have any flattering memories, that would bind them to the Fatherland or by the vanity of works, or by virtues.”¹

However, contrary to what Thomas and his Portuguese translator wanted to make his readers believe, Portuguese women at the time did play an active role in the legal spaces connecting Portugal’s global empire. As a key case in point, this chapter shows how women residing overseas wrote the Portuguese king, petitioning him for grace. The legal possibility of sending such petitions was given to all

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¹ Antoine Léonard Thomas: *Apologia das mulheres ou Discurso em que se mostra com exemplos extrahidos da Historia, tanto antiga como moderna, que ellas são suscepiveis de virtudes Religiosas, Políticas, Guereiras, Literarias e Sociais no grão mais eminente, e que, conformando-se ao espirito predominante dos séculos consequirão, não poucas vezes, a gloria de dominarem nelles, dedicada a Senhora D. Catherina Micaella de Sousa Cezar e Lancastre. Officina de Antônio Alvarez Ribeiro. Porto 1805, p. 158.*

social groups of the Portuguese empire, even the most marginalized. Such a possibility allowed subaltern groups, among them single and married women as well as widows, to negotiate their own destinies and the functioning of the political system on a much larger scale than has conventionally been assumed. Petitions present a revealing source of information on perceptions of the world, as seen by subaltern women. Although they are generally only considered official correspondence, these documents can also be seen as the fruit of dialogue and, perhaps, negotiation between what women wanted to convey and what the system allowed them to do.

Before going deeper into the analysis of these petitions, I need to contextualize how the social imagination regarding women changed, both in the eyes of early modern society and from the perspective of contemporary historians. During the early modern period, women did not often appear as authors of books or poetry and their personal thoughts remained a mystery.² It was not until the nineteenth century that the first female writing on the socio-political and cultural issues of the Portuguese empire began to be published.³ These writings could be found in collections of letters, as in the case of *Correspondência Luso-Brasileira* (1807–1823), among which some letters were written by Maria Barbara Garcez, who had settled in Brazil; or letters from Inácia Carolina, who corresponded with her

² The first Portuguese-speaking female authors were Sórora Maria do Céu (1658–1753), considered to be one of the greatest poets and playwrights of her time; Paula da Graça, who in 1715 published the first book on a European and perhaps even on a global scale about feminist claims; and Teresa Margarida da Silva e Orta (1711–1792), who wrote the first romance written by a woman in the Portuguese language: *Máximas de virtude e formosura*. With respect to Paula da Graça, it should be mentioned that she was a woman of high nobility and a court assistant, maybe a daughter of Diogo Mendonça Corte-Real, a diplomat, politician, ambassador, and secretary of D. João V or a daughter of a chambermaid of Dona Maria Ana de Austria. Under these conditions, living in the Portuguese court, she published *Bondade das Mulheres venciada, e Malícia dos Homens manifesta* in 1715, considered nowadays to be a first feminist “revolutionary shout,” in which she pointed to the following problems: the inequality between men and women, the absence of equivalent employment, women’s oppression, domestic violence, marriage as a tyrant state, and the wealth of the Kingdom distributed only to men. Fina d’Armada, who studied the case of Paula da Graça, proposes that “nobody is born a feminist. Nobody is a feminist only by wanting it. It happens by life circumstances, by an observational spirit of the world, by instruction.” Fina D’Armada: *The Feminist Book of 1715: The First Revolutionary Shout*. Oeiras 2005, p. 29.

³ Clara Sarmiento and Maria de Deus Manso: *Mulheres na expansão colonial portuguesa. In: A Expansão: quando o mundo foi português. Da conquista de Ceuta (1415) à atribuição da soberania de Timor Leste* (2002). Évora 2014, p. 332.

mother during the expedition to the West coast of Africa and the city of Goa (1871–1875); or in the form of personal diaries, as in the case of Isabel Pinto da França Tamagnini, who wrote during expeditions between Singapore and Dili (1882–1883).⁴

Historians, in turn, have long ignored the role of female actors in Portuguese history. Until the 1970s, the history of women was virtually a non-topic for debate among Lusophone historians investigating the history of the Portuguese empire, both on the continent and in Brazil. The pioneering work in this field by Elaine Sanceau and Charles Boxer gave rise to organized debate in Portugal at the international congress *O Rosto Feminino da Expansão Portuguesa*, of which the results were published under the same title in 1995.⁵ In the 1990s, Maria de Deus Manso, Timothy Coates, Leonor Diaz Seabra, Joseph Levi, Fina D'Armada and Clara Sarmento deepened the discussion on the topic of the role of women in building the history of the Portuguese empire. In 2008, *Women in the Portuguese Colonial Empire: The Theater of Shadows* and *Condição Feminina no Império Colonial Português* were published by the Instituto Politécnico do Porto. On the other side of the Atlantic, in the Brazilian Academy, the theme of women, families, and sexuality was increasingly becoming the subject of academic debate, with such research being carried out by Beatriz Nizza da Silva, Mary del Priore, Marcia Amantino, Ronaldo Vainfas and Emanuel Araújo, among others.⁶ Claro Sarmento and Maria de Deus Manso have developed a useful approach when analyzing the correspondence of women of the nineteenth century Portuguese empire, paying attention to the so-called “silent narrative,” meaning what can be drawn from such documents about their everyday and personal lives, the hopes and desires of such women within then-existing social structures.⁷

The documents studied in this chapter are petitions that were sent to King D. João V (1706–1750) by women living in the Portuguese colonies during the first

⁴ Ibidem, pp. 297-298.

⁵ Charles Ralph Boxer: *A Mulher na Expansão Ultramarina Ibérica 1415-1815: alguns factos, ideias e personalidades*. Lisboa 1975; Elaine Sanceau: *As mulheres portuguesas no ultramar*. Porto 1979.

⁶ Maria de Deus Manso: *Filhas esquecidas do Império Português: memória de mulheres na América*. In: *Naveg@mérica*. Revista electrónica editada por la Asociación Española de Americanistas no. 15 (2015), pp. 4-7. <https://revistas.um.es/navegamerica/article/view/241461/183641>.

⁷ Sarmento and Manso: *Mulheres na expansão*, p. 327.

half of the eighteenth century. The original documents are stored in the *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino* in Lisbon, Portugal. Many of these petitions concern inheritance; legal, family, business, or financial issues; as well as rights to land or requests for permission to return to Portugal. Such petitions contain expressions of dissatisfaction and complaints about injustices and lawlessness, against which Portuguese women dared to raise their voices. It is worth noting that these women lived in or were associated with all of Portugal's Atlantic colonies and were widows of men who held various positions in the colonial administration, such as governor, sergeant major (*sargento-mor*), municipal magistrate (*alcaide*), a doctor, and even a foreigner or exiled.

My purpose here is to amplify the voices of these women and contrast how they were considered by the society and how they fashioned their own self-images and questioned gender norms in the colonial world. Focusing on the rhetorical strategies used by the widows in their interactions with the monarch, this chapter pursues the following questions: what use did these letters have in self-positioning the widows within the existing colonial space? How did these women break with the early modern archetype of the devout and honorable mother, fashioning images of a deserving female subject in order to assume authoritative positions in socio-economic life and, finally, how far was a widow allowed to fashion her own identity, free from socio-cultural and legal factors?

Here I seek to demonstrate that having a long-distance relationship with the Lisbon administration helped such women to take the lead in efforts to be active and conscious members of colonial society. These petitions, I argue, reveal both an intensity of individual relationships and a broad range of social relationships that may help us to better understand gender norms in Portuguese colonial society and how such widows portrayed themselves in a world generally dominated by men.

THE WOMEN OF PORTUGAL'S OVERSEAS EMPIRE

In order to position such women in the context of the eighteenth-century Portuguese empire, we first need to understand how they arrived to the overseas territories, what difficulties they encountered, and what kinds of activities they were involved in. During the first decade after the Portuguese discovered a sea route to India in 1498, women were not allowed to make the journey. Their pres-

ence on board was forbidden and noncompliance with such legislation was a punishable crime.⁸ This prohibition was, in part, the result of superstitions about women on board – seen as a kind of *femme fatale* – who could cause a catastrophe at sea and lead to the death of the entire crew. This does not mean, however, that Portuguese women did not manage to get to the overseas colonies, as exemplified by Dona Isabel Pereira, who sailed to India during the second half of the sixteenth century, where she became the owner of a hospitality house in which she helped the sick and the poor.⁹

King D. Manuel I did not oblige men to live together with their wives in the overseas colonies, known as *conquistas*, for moving the family into an unknown part of the world came with high costs.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the king allowed and financed the so-called *Orfãs del Rei*, to house orphan girls from good homes who had either lost their parents or were left under the care of the Crown. They were sent to the city of Goa in India, where they married Portuguese settlers in order to increase the Portuguese population. The *Orfãs del Rei* was an important institution that guaranteed the continuity of the Lusophone presence in Asia. Yet this was not the only role Portuguese women fulfilled in the overseas colonies. Fernanda Angius has observed that they were there to bear Portuguese children but also to keep the men psychologically balanced and sexually satisfied, to be a continuation, property and inseparable element of man, and to guarantee socio-cultural stability at the service of a colonial occupation policy.¹¹

Under such conditions, it would be easy to conclude that the role of women was limited to the domestic sphere. Yet, Iberian historiography on the colonial discoveries and expansion is full of examples of strong and courageous women who belie this stereotype. An exceptional example is Dona Ana Pimentel, the wife of the first Brazilian governor of São Vicente, Martin Afonso de Sousa. Pimentel was the first woman to exercise executive power in Brazil, between 1534 and 1544. Appointed as her husband's procurator during the time he served in India, she took over the administration of his Brazilian captaincy, for which she super-

⁸ Sanceau: As mulheres portuguesas no ultramar, pp. 20-21.

⁹ Ibidem, pp. 42-47.

¹⁰ Fernanda Angius: Presença da mulher na legislação da expansão. In: Rosto feminino da expansão portuguesa. Lisbon 1995, Vol. 1, p. 777.

¹¹ Ibidem, pp. 777-780.

vised plantations, controlled the cultivation of wheat and other crops, and contributed to the huge economic development of the region – all without having ever stepped onto the South American continent.¹²

Although Dona Ana Pimentel would never see the Brazilian colony, an indigenous woman from there was given the opportunity to visit Europe. Paraguaçu, daughter of the cacique (*morubixaba*) Taparica, leader of an indigenous tribe belonging to the Tupinambá family, married a Portuguese castaway, Diogo Álvares Correia, known better under the pseudonym Caramuru (“a man from the fire”).¹³ In 1528, they sailed to France, where she was baptized and received the Christian name of Catarina Álvares, in honor of Catharina des Ganches, the wife of the captain of the ship on which they had sailed. After returning to the American continent, they played a significant role in the history of Brazil in strategic and symbolic terms. In the north-western region of Bahia, Paraguaçu and Caramuru drew up a covenant between the indigenous Tupinambá peoples and the Portuguese. In addition, they created the first Christian family in Brazil, and Paraguaçu was identified with the biblical Eve, becoming the symbolic mother of all Brazilians.

It may also be observed that Portuguese women did exercise some power in the overseas colonies, such as Dona Brites de Albuquerque, who took over the duties of her husband, the captain-major of the Pernambuco captaincy. In 1553, she became the first female governor of the captaincy, an office that she occupied until 1584. Also worth mentioning is Inês de Sousa, wife of Salvador Correia de Sá, who organized the women’s paramilitary movement in 1583, which joined other rebellious groups in order to defend the city of Rio de Janeiro against a French invasion. One last example is Maria Rosa de Leitão, who in 1595 founded the *Recolhimento da Conceição* in the city of Olinda, which was destined to help women in need.¹⁴

Unfortunately, at present we know much less about women in Africa, Portuguese or indigenous. Tropical climate, fear of disease, and an unstable sociopolitical situation along the West Coast of Africa were not factors that favored the establishment of European families. During the earliest stage of colonization, a

¹² Janina Z. Klawa: O papel das mulheres nos descobrimentos e na expansão portuguesa. In: Rosto feminino da expansão portuguesa, Vol. 1, pp. 254-255.

¹³ Ibidem, pp. 254-255.

¹⁴ Ibidem, pp. 255-256.

woman in Africa was an object of fascination, desired but also feared. The physical appearance of black women was noted by, among others, the Portuguese chronicler Gomes Eanes Zurara (1410–1473), the Venetian traveler and merchant Alvise Cadamosto (1432–1488), and the German geographer Hieronymus Münzer (1437–1508). Michał Tymowski has noted that, during the early stage of the establishment of Luso-African contact, African women were seen as both the victims of slave hunting and a symbol of heroic resistance against white colonizers. Nonetheless, they later became concubines and partners of the Portuguese and, consequently, became their wives and mothers of their children.

Entering into the bonds of marriage with women from traditional clans allowed Portuguese sailors and merchants to embed themselves deeper within the West African cultures. Such women often became translators and intermediaries in the local trade.¹⁵ Thus, black women became “dynamic agents of the integration of Europeans in order to integrate them into African values,”¹⁶ while the mixed marriages acted to guarantee “greater social cohesion and a whitening process that could be synonymous of social mobility.”¹⁷ A revealing observation about this process of upward social mobility comes from a French agent and general of the Royal Company of Africa who, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, made trading voyages along North and South Guinea. In his journals, he observes that African women adopted European values and customs, giving an example of Dona Catalina, a black woman who was married to a Portuguese man and who, despite being surrounded by African servants, dressed like a European woman.¹⁸

Although little is known about such African women, we know even less about white Portuguese women in Africa. Unlike Asia, which for many Europeans became a symbol of unbounded riches and chances to realize social ascent, the African colonies were perceived as places with the smallest potential for promotion or rapid enrichment. Such a hierarchy of opportunities can likely explain the small share of Portuguese women and, in general, Portuguese families in Luso-

¹⁵ Michał Tymowski: *Europejczycy i Afrykanie. Wzajemne odkrycia i pierwsze kontakty*. Toruń 2017, pp. 279–280.

¹⁶ Alfredo Margarido: *As mulheres outras nas ilhas atlânticas e na costa ocidental africana nos séculos XV a XVII*. In: *Rosto feminino da expansão portuguesa*, Vol. 1, p. 367.

¹⁷ Arlindo Manuel Caldeira: *As mulheres no quotidiano da ilha de São Tomé nos séculos XV e XVI*. In: *Rosto feminino da expansão portuguesa*, Vol. 1, p. 503.

¹⁸ Margarido: *As mulheres outras nas ilhas atlânticas*, p. 370.

African societies. Despite the lack of available information, some things are known about some of the women, designated as *degradadas* (exiled), who were sent to Africa as part of their punishment for prostitution or minor offenses committed in Portugal. Additionally, it is written in the chronicles of Rui da Pina that, in 1482, several women sailed with the crew of Diogo de Azambuja to the territory of present-day Ghana, where the construction of the castle-factory of São Jorge de Mina began. Half a century later, King Manuel I issued a *Regimento* in which he defined the rules of conduct for European women living there and working in this overseas factory.¹⁹

In his work *Mulheres Aventureiras. Portuguesas espelhadas pelos quatro cantos do mundo* (2009), the journalist Rosário Sá Coutinho has described women who appeared in the fortified towns of North Africa in the sixteenth century. Although the study is not strictly academic, it presents revealing insights into the history of women in militarized regions dominated by men. Sá Coutinho refers to the biographies of D. Isabel Henriques, wife of the captain of Arzil; D. Mécia de Monroy, daughter of the captain of Santa Cruz to Cabo de Gué; and D. Maria d'Eça, who in the absence of her husband became Governor of Ceuta in 1548–1549, and who later became one of the wives of the Moroccan *xerife*. These women were, however, part of the elite, in contrast to Antónia Rodrigues, born to a poor Portuguese family, who at the age of twelve, disguised as a boy, managed to get to the city of Mazagão, where she lived for five years. In North Africa, it was much more common for Portuguese women to accompany their husbands on journeys to the Muslim countries of Africa, where their men held high positions and were responsible for the defense of the region. This was most likely due to the relatively close geographical distances, but it is possible that the metropolis wanted to maintain a white society relatively united and integrated in order to prevent eventual relations between white men and Muslim women. In this vein, the law then in force prohibited sexual relations between Christians and Muslims.²⁰ Women, however, did not accompany their husbands on transoceanic jour-

¹⁹ Tymowski: Europejczycy i Afrykanie, pp. 272-273.

²⁰ Título XXI. De Judeu ou Mouro que dorme com alguma Cristã. E Cristão que dorme com Moura ou qualquer outra Infiel. Coleção da Legislação Antiga e Moderna do Reino de Portugal (1514). Por resolução de S. Magestade de 2 de Setembro de 1786, p. 70.

neys to Brazil, southern Africa, and Asia, which were argued against as presenting costs that were too high for the Lisbon court.²¹

From the above examples, we can conclude that, although women appeared in numerous descriptions of the Portuguese colonial overseas empire, such accounts were written primarily by men. Consequently, from such descriptions we do not learn much if anything about colonial reality as seen through the eyes of the women involved. Michał Tymowski has drawn attention to the fact that testimonies of presence and activity in the Portuguese colonies often remain anonymous or are missing entirely as many women's written and artistic statements are still missing.²² If there were diaries or letters written by women from that period, we could learn more about their feelings, fears, and longings that tormented their emotions on the peripheries of the colonial empire.

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF WIDOWHOOD

As already explained, in the early modern colonial world men defined women's identity in society: what a woman should be, what society required from her, and on what features feminine stereotypes were to be based. While portraying the ideal woman, authors such as Cristóvão da Costa,²³ Duarte Nunes de Leão,²⁴ Luís dos Anjos,²⁵ Diogo Manuel Aires de Azevedo,²⁶ and Damião de Froes Perim²⁷ praised above all her chastity, honesty, constancy, silence, justice, self-communion, courage, heroism, and talent in letters and art. However, married women were even more valued in society. Many authors praised their dignity, the noble status of the wife, and her dependence on her husband. Such an idealized woman – seen

²¹ Boxer: *A Mulher na Expansão Ultramarina Ibérica*, pp. 15-16.

²² Tymowski: *Europejczycy i Afrykanie*, p. 282.

²³ Author of *Tratado em lavour das mulheres e da castidade, honestidade, silêncio e justiça*, (1525).

²⁴ Author of *Descrições do Reino de Portugal* (1610).

²⁵ Author of *Jardim de Portugal em que se dá notícias de algumas santas e outras mulheres ilustres em virtude*, (1626).

²⁶ Author of *Portugal ilustrado pelo sexo feminine* (1736).

²⁷ Author of *Teatro Heroíno – abecedário histórico e catálogo das mulheres ilustres em armas, letras, ações heroicas e artes liberais* (1736 and 1740).

as a woman-mother, woman-wife, and woman-daughter – was maintained in Portugal until at least the nineteenth century.²⁸

One of the most controversial works in this regard is Francisco Manuel de Melo's *Carta de guia de casados*, published in 1650, in which the author – a nobleman, military hero, and politician – gave guidance on the essentials of a successful marriage. According to Melo, a woman was the property of her husband, and the less cultured she was, the more faithful she became. Additionally, he admitted that women should not be involved in any debates regarding politics, government elections or war, as it made him angry.²⁹ This work was published in a year when peace was re-established on Portuguese lands and the country was reborn as an independent realm. It seems, however, that little changed in the lives of Portuguese women, whose existence was further limited to the four walls of their own homes. Even their everyday paths were marked out and limited between home and the church. One traveler who visited Portugal at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries observed the following:

“The woman from Lisbon awaits the processions of Lent with great impatience because, on this occasion, she is allowed to go out into the street to attend the ceremonies. Those women who have a desire to take advantage of this time of freedom for other purposes can do so without danger, and it is almost impossible to spy on them, because of the large number of women on the streets [...], while the husbands sleep peacefully, remaining firm in their conviction that they should not gainsay the devotion [...] of their wives; some people say that such encounters are not forgotten and, on these occasions, many women recover from having lived under [their husband's] control.”³⁰

As we can see, women living in Portugal seemed to live in isolation. The married ones spent most of their time at home, intimidated by their jealous husbands. Although Baroque women were praised for being heroic, artistic, polite, and holy, they remained unnoticed. Their education was still under the

²⁸ Those who also wrote about such features of the perfect woman were, among others, João de Barros (*Espelho de casados*, 1540) and Diogo Paiva de Andrade (*Casamento perfeito*, 1630). Maria Regina Tavares de Silva: *Estudos sobre a mulher em Portugal – breve perspectiva histórica*. In: *Rosto feminino da expansão portuguesa*, Vol. 1, pp. 63-66.

²⁹ Francisco Manuel de Melo: *Carta de Guia de Casados*. Available at: <https://www.luso-livros.net/Livro/carta-guia-casados/> [Accessed: April 15, 2018], pp. 71-72.

³⁰ Author's own translation. Cited in: Ana Hatherly: *Tomar a palavra. Aspectos da vida da mulher na sociedade barroca*. In: *Revista de Ciências Sociais e Humanas*, no. 9 (1996), p. 272.

control of a man or family. However, the seventeenth century opened up some new possibilities for Portuguese women to escape from this control, one of which was a career in religious institutions. To many girls and young women, living in a convent provided better opportunities than marriage, as it freed them from husbands who abused and mistreated them or, in extreme cases, could even kill them without being punished for their crimes.³¹ Clara Sarmiento and Maria de Deus Manso have drawn attention to the challenges of women living in colonial Brazil, dominated by patriarchal relations that subjected them to subservience and deprived them of the right to express their opinions. Not only did those coming from higher social classes lived there in isolation until the mid-nineteenth century, but the Church played a significant role in upholding patriarchal ideology and asymmetrical relations between women and men as well.³²

If marriage posed many limitations on a woman's life, widowhood in the early modern world was even worse. Widows were often constituted as a separate social group in Europe. In the British world, Jaqueline Eales has noted that, whereas the national literature divided men with regard to their status or social rank, women were supposed to fit into one of three groups: virgins, wives, or widows.³³ It was believed that their proper sphere was limited to the family in which they should obediently fulfil their duties in one of these roles.³⁴ Meanwhile, as Janine M. Lanza has observed, in French society widows constituted a completely separate group, "neither as a woman nor, certainly, as a man."³⁵ Although this status enabled them to receive some economic privileges that would allow them to perform certain duties like men, they were still unable to compete with them in the economic sphere because of gender discrimination. Men were afraid that widows would disturb the well-ordered hierarchical society, based on a patriarchal structure. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers described widows as "sexually

³¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 270-272.

³² Sarmiento and Manso: *Mulheres na expansão*, p. 294.

³³ Jaqueline Eales: *Women in early modern England, 1500–1700*. London 1998, p. 24.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 58.

³⁵ Janine M. Lanza: *From Wives to Widows in Early Modern Paris: Gender, Economy, and Law*. Aldershot 2007, p. 8.

wanton,” “greedy wastrels,” and “unstable, irrational, incapable of controlling their sexual urges, and ultimately untrustworthy.”³⁶

According to the *Ordenações Filipinas*, a legal compendium composed after the King Philip II of Spain also became King of Portugal in 1580, widows were granted some freedom in deciding about their patrimony, but female inferiority was still strongly visible.³⁷ First, after her husband’s death, a woman became the head of the family, providing that at the time of his death they lived as husband and wife, and she was the one who divided the inheritance between their heirs.³⁸ The law, however, also pointed to the lack of rationality of women (“fraqueza do entender das mulheres viúvas”), who at the time of their widowhood would become poor and needy and, intentionally or not, could squander their entire estate.³⁹

Nonetheless, the law, as written, did not always reflect reality. Although Portuguese legislation granted women certain rights, early modern societies were often governed by their own local laws and practices. Such a situation can be illustrated by the curious example of Clara Lopes. Lopes, who lived in poverty in mid-eighteenth-century Coimbra, suffered female oppression during her marriage to Pedro Dias, who jealously kept her at home. After the death of her husband, she

³⁶ Ibidem, pp. 1-4.

³⁷ Some of the laws dedicated to women and widows in the *Ordenações Filipinas* are for example: Livro 2 Tit.37: Das mulheres, que têm coisas da Coroa do Reino, e se casam sem licença del rei, Livro 3 Tit. 47: Que o marido não possa litigar em juízo sobre bens de raiz sem outorga de sua mulher, Livro 4 Tit. 46: Como o marido e mulher são meeiros em seus bens, Livro 4 Tit. 48: Que o marido não possa vender, nem alhear bens sem outorga da mulher, Livro 4 Tit. 60: Do homem casado que fia alguém sem consentimento de sua mulher, Livro 4 Tit. 61: Do benefício do Senatus consulto Velleano, introduzido em favor das mulheres que ficam por fiadoras de outrém, Livro 4 Tit. 64: Da doação de bens móveis feita pelo marido sem outorga da mulher, Livro 4 Tit. 65: Da doação feita pelo marido à mulher ou pela mulher ao marido, Livro 4 Tit. 85: Dos que não podem ser testemunhas em testamentos, Livro 4 Tit. 94: Como o marido e mulher sucedem um a outro, Livro 4 Tit. 95: Como a mulher fica em posse e cabeça de casal por morte de seu marido, Livro 4 Tit. 105: Das mulheres viúvas que casam de cinquenta anos tendo filhos, Livro 4 Tit. 106: Das viúvas que casam antes do ano e dia, Livro 4 Tit. 107: Das viúvas que alheam como não devem e desbaratam seus bens, Livro 5 Tit. 38: Do que matou sua mulher, por a achar em adultério. For more information see also: A mulher em Portugal: Alguns aspetos do evoluir da situação feminina na legislação nacional e comunitária, Vol. 1. Lisboa 2014.

³⁸ Ordenações Filipinas, Livro 4, Título XCV, “Como a mulher fica em posse e cabeça de casal por morte de seu marido.” Brasília 2004, p. 949.

³⁹ Ordenações Filipinas, Livro 4, Título CVII, “Das viúvas, que alheiam, como não devem, e desbaratam seus bens,” Brasília 2004, pp. 1015-1016.

became the sole breadwinner of the family, automatically being forced to look for a job, which she found in the public sphere by helping the poor and the sick. Unfortunately, Clara had to face stereotypes about women working at night in public areas, according to which she would not only be a “public woman” but also a witch. One night, while providing help to one sick student from Coimbra, she was severely beaten by him, becoming in consequence physically disabled. As an argument to justify self-defense, the student claimed he got scared because she could be a witch. According to Arilda Ines Miranda Ribeiro, who has studied Lopes’ trail, it is unclear whether her case was recounted by Lopes herself or if it was elaborated by a man. If written by her, it would mean that, despite all legal and social constraints, Lopes attempted to fashion her gender identity against written and unwritten socially acceptable norms. Meanwhile, as Clara Lopes became a kind of legend and her story was generally seen as a warning to women against exercising any rights outside the home, it could indicate that somebody – likely a man – may have used her image to speak on her behalf. Consequently, her self-fashioning, in this case, may not have been an independent process and could have been shaped by others who sought to maintain (male) hegemony over society.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, her example certainly reveals the difficulties and challenges for women who struggled to alter gender norms in early modern Portuguese society.

Fortunately, neither men’s fears nor their desire to maintain traditional relations between women and men could withstand the changes of the time. The unstable political and economic situation, civil and international wars, and migrations disturbed the traditional order. As Alysson M. Poska has observed, during the early modern period, peasant women in Galicia, a peripheral region in the north-western part of Spain, gained significant social and economic authority as a result of the extremely high rates of male migration and the relative weakness of the nobility, as well as secular and ecclesiastical institutions, compared the big Spanish cities. Poska seeks to refute traditional ideas about the role of women based on female chastity, showing that there were other factors, including demographic, economic and cultural, that could define gender norms better than honor based on female chastity. One of Poska’s theses is that the formation of gender

⁴⁰ Arilda Ines Miranda Ribeiro: *Vestígios da educação feminina no século XVIII em Portugal*. São Paulo 2002, pp. 112-117.

norms was a very complex process that went beyond the cultural norms set from above. In her own words:

“I am not arguing for the existence of a matriarchal society [...] or saying that women in anyway ruled men. This was not an ideal world of sexual harmony or gender equality [...]. Nevertheless, the convergence of a number of factors, including demography, economy, and cultural traditions, produced gender norms and relationships that made women central to Galician society, and women recognized the degree to which Galician culture revolved around them.”⁴¹

As far as the Portuguese empire is concerned, Charles Boxer has proposed that the widows of the Portuguese overseas territories – regardless of their wealth – lived a much calmer life than married women. Their relative economic independence can also be shown through statistics: in 1759, in the Brazilian north-eastern region of Santo Amaro, there were thirty-seven landlords of sugar plantations and already six landladies; meanwhile, the census carried out in Goiás in 1818 showed that there were women who owned sugar mills, not because they had inherited them, but because they had bought them along with slaves.⁴²

It is also worth referring to a notion presented by Cynthia E. Milton who analyzed petitions of Spanish widows in the Latin American colonies. Milton sees a linkage between a gender culture and a political culture, as a consequence of which the widow oscillated between the law that portrayed her as a defenseless woman and a weak political actor while, at the same time, it legitimized her relationship with the king’s patriarchal authority.⁴³

Building on the above-developed hypothesis regarding the complex socio-cultural circumstances of gender construction and drawing on Milton’s idea of the interrelation between gender and political cultures, the following section explores the lives of women in the Atlantic overseas colonies of the early modern Portuguese empire. Far away from royal and political institutions, Church authorities, or the static family-based hierarchies of the metropole, it seems that *Fado* (*fatum*, fate) gave them a chance to create their own spaces within patriarchal society and

⁴¹ Allyson M. Poska: *Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain. The Peasants of Galicia*. New York 2006, p. 21.

⁴² Sarmiento and Manso: *Mulheres na expansão*, p. 319.

⁴³ Cynthia E. Milton: *The Many Meanings of Poverty: Colonialism, Social Compacts, and Assistance in Eighteenth-Century Ecuador*. Stanford 2007, pp. 100-101.

to re-shape gender norms in a male-controlled world. It is also worth reflecting upon the question of how Stephen Greenblatt's argument about early modern self-fashioning processes involving a submission to an "absolute power or authority situated at least partially outside the self" holds up in these widows' petitions.⁴⁴

FASHIONING THE DESERVING FEMALE COLONIAL SUBJECT

The historical analysis undertaken in this chapter covers selected petitions sent by Portuguese widows from throughout the empire during the reign of King D. João V (1706–1750). During the first half of the eighteenth century, when the Portuguese court belonged to the wealthiest and most prestigious of Europe, these women sent to the metropolis more than one hundred and sixty petitions from the regions of present-day Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinee-Bissau and Saint Thomas and Princes Islands. By far the most important issue in these petitions was each petitioner's economic situation. Women asked the Crown for financial support, reimbursements, and the payment of wages due to their deceased husbands. The second most frequently discussed topic was children (e.g., guardianship or the administration of property) and legal issues that involved various law enforcement agencies, such as *Relação da Bahia* or *Tribunal Mesa de Consciência de Ordens*. Next in importance were financial issues related to, among other issues, household management, plantations or sugar mills (*engenhos*), and the confirmation, demarcation, or recovery of land rights. The common denominator of the studied petitions is the opposition of these widows to the injustices they had to face.

Before proceeding, it is worth considering what can and cannot be found in these petitions. It is certain that they were not written by the widows themselves but, rather, by notaries, lawyers, and royal officials, who partly used the typical formulations that also appeared in by the petitions sent by male colonists or their descendants to acquire favors from the Crown. Rhetoric in these petitions can, thus, be seen as a logical outcome of the widespread political ideal that the king needed to take care of his vassals and subjects in their times of need. On the other hand, the documents still allow us to hear the voices of the petitioning women and gain a better understanding of their situations within the colonial reality and their

⁴⁴ Stephen Greenblatt: *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. London 1980, pp. 3-9.

critical perceptions of it. Unfortunately, however, we will not be able to find information about their most personal thoughts and experiences. It is also impossible to analyze, for now, how much they may have differed from women living in Portugal, but it is worth analyzing what their social positions and a broad range of relations were as well as to what degree they were detached from the traditional image of woman promoted in their homelands.

In the petitions sent by the Portuguese widows, they were portrayed as “poor,” “helpless” and living in “miserable conditions,” but such words seem to have had a different purpose than we would normally expect. The women may not have wanted to complain directly about their lives but, instead, wanted to arouse the king’s pity, so that he would make a decision in their favor. According to canon law at the time, they belonged to a group called *miserabiles personae*, who the church and state were obliged to support in financial and legal terms. It seems that they consciously emphasized and self-fashioned their weakness as women, using this condition to negotiate with the king. This can be seen in the example of Micaela Maria de Assunção, a resident of the Kingdom of Angola, and the widow of Romão de Pina, a defamed exile who was sent to Angola as a punishment for counterfeiting money. In a petition sent in 1725, Micaela asked the king for permission to leave Angola. After the death of Romão de Pina, she portrayed herself as “helpless,” living in a “miserable state” and suffering “annoyance.” To make matters worse, she was the mother of three children, João, José, and Ana, whom she had under her guardianship. It is worth mentioning that by giving the names of the children, it brought them out of a state of being anonymous. In the end, Micaela asked the king to aid her out of her condition of “helplessness” by allowing her and her children to go to Rio de Janeiro, where she had family who were willing to support them.⁴⁵

A similar strategy was taken by Teresa Maria de Jesus, a resident of the region of Pará, who used the argument of being too “old” and “poor” to maintain her domestic servants. One indigenous and three Zambo (*cafuzas*) women, one of whom had a child, desired to remain in her house after the death of her husband, Josef

⁴⁵ Requerimento de Micaela Maria da Assunção, viúva do degredado Romão de Pina, ao rei D. João V, September 13, 1725. Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino de Lisboa (hereafter AHU), Angola, Cx. 24, Doc. 2423.

Coelho.⁴⁶ All these women were “free from captivity,” but they wanted to continue to serve their landlady. Yet, for some unknown reason, perhaps financial, they were obliged to leave. Teresa Maria de Jesus stressed that they worked for her without being enslaved, and some were even brought up in her company.⁴⁷ Antonio de Faria, holding the position of *Procurador dos Índios* (Procurator of the Indians) created by the Portuguese Crown with the purpose of looking after the interests of the indigenous populations, confirmed that, since the *cafuzas* wanted to continue in her service by their own will, it seemed fair to grant Teresa Maria de Jesus what she asked for. In the document, good or even family-like relations were noted between Teresa Maria de Jesus and her servants, to whom she left the right to choose whether to continue working for her or not. It is unclear whether Teresa Maria de Jesus looked to the Crown for assistance because she decided to stand in defense of those who could not do so for themselves or, maybe, she defended her own social status by avoiding the loss of her servants, which would mean a considerable drop in status. Moreover, it is curious that such requests regarding domestic issues were sent to the king in Portugal and not to local authorities and that the petition was checked by the *Procurador dos Índios*.

Feminine weakness was also mentioned by an English lady, Isabel Houblon, probably living in Lisbon, a widow of a Portuguese businessman. Houblon was seeking reimbursement of a debt that was owed to her and to her husband, Antonio Monteiro, who had been a rich and influential proprietor of a Brazilian sugar plantation in the city of Boa Vista in Paraíba. The person she delegated to represent her was Henrique Gibbin, a merchant in Pernambuco, through whom Houblon asked King D. João V to order the local judge (*ouvidor-geral*) from Paraíba to issue an enforceable letter against Antonio Monteiro for debt reimbursement, as she hoped to recover the money that belonged to her husband. Houblon assessed her situation as being “unjust,” arguing that she was a poor woman who was without any livelihood while her debtor continued to be wealthy. She most probably used the argument about her poverty to negotiate with the king as well

⁴⁶ Josef Coelho is not a complete name. The middle name is missing due to the illegibility of the petition, which is now in poor condition.

⁴⁷ Requerimento de Teresa Maria de Jesus, viúva e moradora na cidade do Pará, para o rei D. João V, February 27, 1737. AHU, Pará, Cx. 19, Doc. 1825.

as to intervene in the internal affairs of the north-eastern Brazilian region.⁴⁸ At the time of the filing of the petition, Houblon was not in Brazil but in Portugal. As it turns out, there were more such cases. One example is that of Maria da Cunha, whose husband Gregorio Pires da Costa was brutally killed in the mines of Ouro Preto. Although she lived in the north of Portugal, she demanded justice through her lawyer despite the distance.⁴⁹ The example of Houblon shows, however, that women not only recognized and disagreed with the gender injustices of colonial Portugal but also engaged in fighting against men who held high and prestigious social positions.

This self-confident attitude can be also seen in a petition sent to the king in 1738 from the Brazilian city of Recife by Gracia da Cruz e Silva, the widow of Doctor Manoel da Fonseca Marques. She asked the king to arrest the influential and wealthy Miguel Carneiro da Cunha, who was responsible for the murder of her husband and who, out of fear of punishment, escaped and was hiding on the plantation belonging to his father. Gracia da Cruz e Silva took up the fight not only against a high-ranking man, who held the position of Cavalry Coronel (*coronel de cavalaria*) and sergeant major, but above all against an extremely influential family in the region. The Carneiro family came to Pernambuco from the Portuguese region of Minho before the Dutch invasion, giving rise to the noble line of Carneiros in Brazil. Members of this family performed high-level functions in the region for many generations. Additionally, they owned a sugar cane plantation, which was a symbol of wealth and prestige, soon becoming one of the most influential families in Pernambuco.⁵⁰ Gracia da Cruz e Silva asked the king to order the *desembargador* (appellate judge) and *ouvidor geral* (chief crown justice) to arrest those who were responsible for the murder of her husband, whom she mentioned by name and surname, and asked for the detention of the sergeant

⁴⁸ Requerimento de Isabel Houblon, viúva inglesa, por seu procurador e homem de negócio, Henrique Gibbin, ao rei D. João V, January 30, 727. AHU, Paraíba, Cx. 7, Doc. 539.

⁴⁹ Requerimento de Maria da Cunha, viúva de Gregório Pires da Costa, June 19, 1725. AHU, Minas Gerais, Cx. 6, Doc. 590.

⁵⁰ Rafael Chamboleyron and Karl-Heinz Arenz (eds.): *Poderes, negócios e saberes: elites plurais num império multifacetado*. Belém 2014, pp. 14-15.

major. Assuming a very forward position, she expressed great hope that “the King will do what is right and fair.”⁵¹

The petition was sent to Portugal more than a year after the murder. Perhaps this was due to logistical problems and transport, or maybe it took so much time to gather all the information about the mentioned assassination. The petition included details of the place and time of the homicide as well as of the circumstances and people who Gracia da Cruz e Silva claims contributed to the death of her husband. According to the petition, the sergeant major ordered the death of her husband, because he did not want to support him in a case regarding another colonel, who went by the name of João de Barros Braga. Dona Gracia used phrases such as “it seems to me” (*parece-me*) and “I heard” (*ouvi-dizer*) several times, which appear to indicate that she received information about the murder from third parties.

Gracia da Cruz e Silva’s petition reveals, beside her act of bravery in submitting it, her self-fashioning practices within the paternalistic and authoritarian society of colonial Brazil, where women had been excluded from the public sphere until the nineteenth century. The first law permitting them to take up education in primary schools came into force in 1827. At that time, the famous feminist book, Nísia Floresta’s *Direitos das mulheres e injustiça dos homens* (1832) was also published and provoked reflection on the social status and gender identity of women, who were still considered incapable of performing public functions. To the contrary, *Direitos das mulheres* defended the active participation of women in commanding positions. Gracia’s petition, sent one century before this book’s publication, shows how women were already reaching beyond the private into the public sphere, presenting herself as a credible legal witness testifying on behalf of her husband. She is portrayed in the petition as a woman who was well-informed about her husband’s professional activity and seemed to be aware of existing social relations. Additionally, she revealed details about the business and demonstrated her knowledge of local political and social correlations, indicating that the sergeant major was a “friend” of other officials, which would make it impossible to solve the problem at the local level.

Fighting against influential men and seeking to determine what is right and wrong was not only the domain of women living in or related to the Brazilian

⁵¹ Requerimento da viúva do doutor Manoel da Fonseca Marques, Gracia da Cruz e Silva, ao rei D. João V, March 31, 1738. AHU, Pernambuco, Cx. 51, Doc. 4528.

colonies. On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, on the Cape Verde Islands, Portuguese widows also demanded justice as they opposed high-ranking officials. Illustrative here is the case of Dona Isabel de Barros Verra, widow of the former governor, Rodrigo de Oliveira da Fonseca, and a resident of the island of Santiago of Cape Verde. Barros Verra sent a petition to the king in 1724 in which she complained about Martinho Tavares de Fonseca, described as an evil and wicked man (*facinoroso*) who was unafraid of God or justice and had committed countless crimes. Together with his accomplices, whom she described as “wicked bandits,” he brought cattle to Barros Verra’s plantations, on which she cultivated wool and corn. She sent her slaves to chase the cattle away, but Tavares de Fonseca started shooting at them with weapons forbidden by the “newest laws” (*leis novissimas*) – almost killing them.

Confronted with the damage done to her plantations by the cattle, Dona Isabel turned to the *ouvidor-geral* for help, accusing Martinho Tavares de Fonseca of destroying her land and using forbidden weapons. Unfortunately, the governor of the island, António Vieira, who was the “particular friend and defender” of the accused, made it impossible to solve this problem at the local level. Therefore, she asked the king to order the *ouvidor-geral* to arrest Tavares de Fonseca together with his accomplices and send them to the Limoeiro prison in Lisbon, where they could be tried. The fact that Martinho Tavares de Fonseca and other robbers remained at large was assessed by her as a “great impertinence.”⁵²

In another fight against injustice and omnipotent officials on the Cape Verde Islands, the plaintiff, Dona Maria José, did not use an argument about her weakness. On the contrary, she issued harsh judgments about high-ranking officials and influential men. Her husband, António Vieira, the governor of Cape Verde – whom we have just seen obstructing justice in the Barros Verra case – died as a consequence of stones being thrown at him, while her son, who held the position of sergeant major, was forced to flee to the coast of today’s Guinee. In her petition, Maria José informed the king about this incident and asked him to arrest and punish João Pereira do Carvalho and his “criminal” brother-in-law, Pedro Cardoso do Amaral. She also requested that he punish the *ouvidor-geral*, Sebastião Bravo Botelho, for insolence and improper legal procedures. Maria José

⁵² Requerimento de Dona Isabel de Barros Bezerra, viúva do antigo governador de Cabo Verde, Rodrigo de Oliveira da Fonseca ao rei D. João V, January 24, 1724. AHU, Cabo Verde, Cx. 10, Doc. 934.

made it appear as if she spoke in the name of the local community, often using expressions that referred to the opinion of the majority, highlighting that this incident caused “general scandal in society” (*escândalo geral do Povo*). She also stated that she had been informed that the *ouvidor-geral* had falsely accused her son of crimes he did not commit and that the official had done so because of some particular interests “of which she had been informed.” Significant here is that, unlike our previous examples, in her fight against the unjust political model of the Cape Verde Islands, Maria José neither invoked her weakness – her feminine inferiority – nor referred to herself as a widow and mother.⁵³

In a petition sent in 1732 from the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe, Dona Francisca Josefa de Sousa, the widow of its former governor, José Pinheiro da Câmara, asked the king to order António Mendes, the *provedor* of the *Fazenda Real* and the captain of the island of the Príncipe, not to prevent her from selling fruits. Josefa de Sousa was a noblewoman who was passing through financial difficulties at that time. In her petition, it is explained that Manuel de Castro e Macedo, *provedor* of the *Fazenda Real* on the Island of São Tomé began legal proceedings against her after Jose de Crasto Rosa had demanded money that her deceased husband owed him. The king stood in Josefa de Sousa’s defense, which led Antonio Mendes, acting out of “hatred,” to impede her from selling fruit. Without being able to pursue her only profitable business, she was “reduced to the greatest misery by not having enough to feed herself and her family, the reason why she was in extreme need.” Therefore, she asked the king that neither the officials nor others to whom this matter could apply be allowed under any pretext forbid the sale of fruits, as it would affect all inhabitants of the islands.⁵⁴

However, not only colonels and royal officials were the cause of complaints by Portuguese widows in the colonies. They even dared to fight against the clergy and the Church. In 1733, Catarina Silveira, the widow of Manuel Fialho de Oliveira, sent a petition to the king to order priests from the Convent of Our Lady of Mount Carmel to refrain from unlawfully taking away land from the inhabitants of the region, which resulted in misery as the population was deprived of their

⁵³ Requerimento de Dona Maria José, viúva do antigo governador de Cabo Verde, António Vieira ao rei D. João V, October 27, 1727. AHU, Cabo Verde, Cx. 12, Doc. 1126.

⁵⁴ Requerimento de D. Francisca Josefa de Sousa, viúva do antigo governador de São Tomé, José Pinheiro da Câmara ao rei D. João V, September 24, 1732. AHU, São Tomé, Cx. 6, Doc. 650.

livelihoods. Catarina de Vieira also wrote to the king in the name of the inhabitants of the region and, despite the fact that there were men in her surroundings, the document was written on her behalf in order to protest the violence enacted by the priests, who wanted to deprive the inhabitants of access to their lands by force.

Vieira emphasized that the lands were legally granted to her deceased husband by a document known as a *Carta de Sesmaria*, signed by the king and legally handed over to Manoel Fialho de Vieira. The lands had brought profits to both settlers and the royal treasury, because tithing and all other taxes were regularly paid. Yet, without royal consent, clerics decided to occupy the lands, which, as Catarina noticed, was incompatible with the current law, *leis novissimas*, which held that the land belonged to those who cultivated it. In her opinion, the priests had brought irreversible destruction, because they did not pay tithes or any other taxes, which “was noticed by her, the settlers, and the other residents.” However, she worried because the “priests are the [ones] in power in this captaincy, they always get what they want.”⁵⁵

Also on the Cape Verde Islands, Filipa Tavares, widow of the former municipal magistrate (*alcaide geral*), André Correia, decided to stand against the clergy as well by informing the king about the murder of her husband. According to her petition, Father Manuel Ribeira de Macedo from the brotherhood of São Pedro dos Clérigos invited André Correia to his plantation in Tamboa, where he was murdered by the cleric’s slaves. Filipa Tavares objected to the fact that no one had been held responsible for the crime so far and both the clergyman and his slaves were “still immune and walking scandalously in the presence of justices.” Additionally, Tavares blamed them for being in possession of a weapon that was legally banned.⁵⁶ Filipa referred to the “miserable state” in which she found herself after the death of her husband, because of the “violence” from which he died and, additionally, the lack of proper legal proceedings. A case had actually been initiated by the local judge, Luis Tavares Vilhado, which, unfortunately, was halted by *ouvidor-geral* Sebastião Bravo Botelho. Therefore, she asked the king to

⁵⁵ Requerimento de Catarina Silveira, viúva de Manuel Fialho de Oliveira para o rei D. João V, March 10, 1733. AHU, Pará, Cx. 15, Doc. 1375.

⁵⁶ Requerimento de Filipa Tavares, moradora na ilha de Santiago e viúva do antigo alcaide geral, André Correia, ao rei D. João V. October 16, 1728. AHU, Cabo Verde, Cx. 12, Doc. 1143.

initiate new legal proceedings against Father Manuel Ribeiro de Macedo, to be charged for her husband's death, and to appoint a new minister who would lead the case.

The cases presented here of petitioning women reflect, above all, their particular attitudes concerning widowhood and their own self-fashioning practices living in overseas colonies. Regrettably, we do not have much reliable information indicating how the bureaucratic process itself went. A letter sent in 1756 by Dominican friar Dom Miguel de Bulhões, bishop and governor of Pará in the northern region of Brazil, to the state governor of Grão-Pará e Maranhão, Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado, found at the Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa somewhat explains not only the procedure itself but also reveals an interesting aspect of the network of contacts that such widows might have created and lived in. In the letter, Bulhões said that he had received a petition from a woman that he did not know, named Dona Luisa de Sousa e Menezes. The document included three more letters from Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado and more than twenty by several people from the Court, all asking to send back a soldier, Antonio José de Vasconcelhos, Dona Luisa's son. Most of the included letters, supporting her request, belonged to noblemen and gentlemen of the Court.⁵⁷ Dom Miguel de Bulhões' letter itself is proof that the request of an unknown woman was able to become the subject of official correspondence between him and the governor of the state. Even more intriguing is the fact that Sousa e Menezes contacted the governor himself, as well as other high-ranking authorities at the royal court in Lisbon. Here we can see that such women were not only surrounded by people from different social classes but also aspired to themselves establish relationships with them.

CONCLUSION

In a world in which men were granted the power to shape the ideal of perfect feminine features, some widows who lived in the Portuguese overseas colonies managed to self-fashion new gender norms. In their petitions, they broke with the early modern archetype of both the devout and honorable lady and submissive mother and widow, assuming instead a bold and critical attitude towards a pater-

⁵⁷ Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, PBA 628, ff. 76-77, (f. 321).

nalistic and authoritarian society. Although it is not possible at present to determine how similar or different the situations were for Portuguese women living in Europe compared to those in the Atlantic colonies, it can be said that women in the overseas territories of the Portuguese Crown started to disagree with the world around them and criticize it sharply.

The petitions analyzed here make audible the voices of women who argued against the injustices of greedy men and the unjust colonial system itself. By going beyond the domestic sphere, they were able to present themselves as community leaders and guardians of justice. The widows studied here portrayed themselves as poor, old, helpless, and disabled women and mothers who lived in miserable conditions. Yet they turned the tables by using the law that generally limited them to demand that the king meet his obligation to provide them assistance. They even benefited, to some extent, from patriarchal and paternalistic norms by emphasizing the self-image of an inferior and weak widow so that they could demand justice, help, favors, and grace. The mixture of canonic and civil laws that limited them in the patriarchal world also provided them with legal means to protest against violence, injustice, omnipotent and high-ranking officials and men holding high and prestigious positions in society, including members of the clergy. Some of these women dared to assess what was right, wrong, unjust or “impertinent,” issuing harsh judgments against those they accused, while others sent requests regarding domestic issues or asked the king to arrest or punish some men for insolence or improper legal procedures.

Self-fashioning practices enacted by widows inhabiting the Portuguese colonial peripheries seem to have been fairly different from Stephen J. Greenblatt’s concept of early modern people constructing their identities by subjecting themselves to a powerful authority and the norms of womanhood it defined. The widows’ construction of self also appears to have been defined by more than just the assumption of the legal role of the defenseless woman, seeking for the king’s protection. Far away from the royal court in Lisbon, the nobility, the Church, and their own families, many of these women were confronted with circumstances that required them to assume a different role than what had been prescribed for them. Women gained power not only because they had access to control of economic resources but also because of new socio-political circumstances in the overseas possessions that allowed them to fashion a new self.

According to the perspective of Allysson M. Poska on constructing gender norms, self-fashioning is considered a complex process based on interactions between gender, politics, demography, sexuality, economy, and family structures in the patriarchal and male-dominated world of, in this case, the Portuguese Atlantic. It was in the colonies, below the equator, where they were enabled to exercise more power over themselves, families, friends, neighbors or even, to some extent, the royal administration. This study of the widow's petitions thus confirms Maria de Deus Manso's observation stated that "despite the control exercised over women, especially the white ones, many of them moved away from the model of a submissive woman and became active in the colonies."⁵⁸ Indeed, it should be emphasized that the new gender standards were associated almost exclusively with white Portuguese women – widows of high-ranking men.

Such widows' self-fashioning was, however, not free from socio-cultural and legal factors, and their identity construction was not completely autonomous. We turn here again to critically examining the self-fashioning theories proposed by Greenblatt. First, he claims that, "fashioning oneself and being fashioned by cultural institutions – family, religion, state – were inseparably intertwined".⁵⁹ Second, as mentioned above, for Greenblatt self-fashioning occurs at the point of encounter between authorities seeking to maintain control and the individual, struggling to balance submission and the preservation of his or her freedom.⁶⁰ The selves of the widows from the Portuguese Atlantic colonies examined here were, indeed, a product of different entwined factors that both shaped their images and helped them to fashion their own selves. However, their self-fashioning was not formed only in response to the authorities but was also complementary to written and unwritten norms established within the family or by Church and state, and the widows benefited from civil and canon law to negotiate their space within the colonies. Moreover, if we assume that petitions sent by them had to be written and edited by the representatives of royal institutions in the colonies, most likely by men, it would also mean that such Portuguese men agreed to the new roles that were being adopted by women living in overseas colonies. This could also mean that a certain dialogue emerged at the male–female level that went beyond the

⁵⁸ Manso: *Filhas esquecidas do Império Português*, p. 11.

⁵⁹ Greenblatt: *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 256.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

existing set of control mechanisms. The widows' self-image, although being molded by different circumstances, factors and forces, was thus neither subverted nor lost in this process of identity formation.⁶¹ Rather, it was transformed from an externally fashioned submissive and weak spouse into a self-fashioned politically aware, dynamic and, often, working woman who contested the injustices of colonial reality. In proposing this form of advancement, I do not seek to deny that the colonial world was based on exploitation and gender inequalities. Yet, as I have attempted to demonstrate here, there was also an emerging space of new opportunities in which women could build and decide upon their own sense of self.

⁶¹ Greenblatt: *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, pp. 3-9.

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LILYAM PADRÓN REYES

“Que esta clase de gente no puede agregarse a los blancos ni pardos”. Ideas en torno al indio miliciano, su calidad social y auto-reconocimiento en Cuba, siglo XVIII

INTRODUCCIÓN

La presencia indígena en la Cuba colonial tomaría cuerpo en la fundación y el reordenamiento de los pueblos de indios, que desde mediados del siglo XVI serían establecidos en las cercanías de las poblaciones cabeceras de La Habana y Santiago de Cuba. Como parte de la implementación de las políticas oficiales desde los tiempos tempranos los indios estarían reconocidos y convocados en la defensa del territorio cubano frente a las amenazas externas que tendrá que hacer frente la Corona española en el Caribe desde fines del siglo XVI. De ahí que sean organizados en cuerpos de milicias que llevarían un peso considerable en la custodia y salvaguarda del espacio cubano.

Con el acontecer del siglo XVIII y la importancia de los cambios políticos, militares y económicos que tendrían una repercusión directa en la renovación de las defensas imperiales, la actuación de los grupos y castas¹ como negros, indios y mulatos se inscriben en el contexto político, donde la carrera militar significaría una posibilidad directa de ascenso social en el medio colonial.

En medio de las nuevas investigaciones,² y desde una visión de conjunto entre la historia atlántica y social, intentaremos el acercamiento a una realidad social, que no solo analice al individuo como objeto, sino como sujeto, en estrecha rela-

¹ El entramado de castas significará un proceso de estratificación social que vendría establecido desde los orígenes del individuo atendiendo a su nacimiento, y que sentaría un precedente para su desarrollo en el seno de la sociedad frente al poder colonial hispano.

² Véase: Juan José Benavides Martínez: *De milicianos del rey a soldados mexicanos. Milicias y Sociedad en San Luis de Potosí (1767-1824)*. Madrid 2014; Raquel Guereca Durán: *Milicias indígenas en la Nueva España: reflexiones del derecho indiano sobre los derechos de la guerra*, México D.F. 2016; Allan J. Kuethe y Kenneth J. Andrien: *The Spanish Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century: Wars and the Bourbons Reforms, 1713–1796*. Cambridge 2014.

ción con el resto de factores económicos y políticos de acuerdo a unas circunstancias sociales concretas. En el estudio de la incorporación de los indios en la defensa abordaremos la mentalidad de una época en reconocerle como un recurso disponible, capaz de jugar un papel en medio de la política colonial, más allá de los intereses particulares y las barreras sociales.

Por lo tanto, trataremos de complejizar el discurso investigativo en función de la problematización sobre la interrelación de los denominadores: sociedad colonial, defensa, indios, representación, y su aplicación al proceso de fichaje de fuentes primarias como cartas de gobernadores, padrones, juicios de residencia y hojas de servicio localizadas en el Archivo General de Indias, Archivo General de Simancas y Archivo Nacional de Cuba; así como los numerosos trabajos de investigación y publicaciones que constituyen fuentes secundarias de consulta obligatoria, posibilitando ajustar historiográficamente la temática.

Aunque en la actualidad desde los estudios arqueológicos y etnográficos se comience a dar un impulso al campo de estudio del indio como actor social en el espacio colonial cubano de los siglos XVI- XVIII,³ entendemos que no debe tratarse como una realidad ajena del interés oficial, por el contrario, sus actuaciones estarán marcadas en un contexto global que emplazaría la estabilidad del imperio hispano en la gestión de sus recursos humanos. De ahí la gran importancia en relacionar sus destinos a un marco más abarcador, incluso conectarle al resto de territorios americanos mediante la aplicación de nuevas metodologías y categorías, así como ejemplos comparativos que nos ayuden a comprender la trascendencia histórica del papel desempeñado por los indios o “naturales”, y sus reacciones ante un modelo colonial del que eran parte indiscutible desde sus orígenes.⁴

³ Cfr. Felipe de Jesús Pérez Cruz: *Los indoamericanos en Cuba: estudios abiertos al presente*. La Habana 2015; Lissette Roura Álvarez, Roger Arrazcaeta Delgado y Carlos Alberto Hernández Oliva: *Indios de La Habana. Aproximación histórica-arqueológica*. La Habana 2017; Roberto Valcárcel Rojas: *El mundo colonial y los indios en las Antillas Mayores. Repensando su estudio arqueológico*. En: *Boletín del Museo del Hombre Dominicano*, no. 47, (2016), pp. 359-377.

⁴ Nos referimos a las actuaciones de los indios o naturales frente a las autoridades coloniales como parte del auto-reconocimiento en las milicias frente a su condición étnica desde mediados del siglo XVI y durante el XVIII.

EL INDIO Y SU INTEGRACIÓN EN LAS TAREAS DE DEFENSA, SIGLOS XVI-XVII

Dentro de las necesidades defensivas de la isla, y en especial de Santiago de Cuba, la insuficiencia de recursos humanos para su guarda y custodia desde inicios del siglo XVI, justificaría la utilización de los indios naturales como recurso disponible a los intereses del real servicio. Desde el establecimiento oficial de los “pueblos de indios” en 1552, se manejaría que la utilización de sus vecinos representase un refuerzo tanto a las labores económicas, como a la disposición de otros servicios oficiales en las villas. Dentro de las prestaciones y oficios que serían confiados a los indígenas ocuparía un papel importante su utilización como fuerza de trabajo auxiliar en la construcción del sistema de fortificaciones que implementaría la Corona para la protección de su emporio colonial americano desde mediados del siglo XVI, ante la expansión del corso y la piratería por los territorios de su fachada atlántica, y especialmente en el Caribe (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Ubicación geográfica de los pueblos de indios de Guanabacoa (occidente) y Los Caneyes (oriente), siglos XVI-XVII. Fuente: AGI, Santo Domingo-Mapas y planos, 819.

Frente a una población escasa, las nuevas construcciones defensivas en La Habana y Santiago de Cuba demandarían una mano de obra regular y suficiente en la que estarían convocados esclavos, forzados y los indios naturales asentados en dichas ciudades. En especial, este último grupo serían requeridos desde sus inicios en el oficio de auxiliares para los trabajos en las fortificaciones según las

obligaciones contraídas bajo la condición de “vecinos” como parte de su adaptación e integración al nuevo espacio colonial.⁵

Si bien los llamados “indios” representarían para el imaginario colonial un recuerdo de la conquista/colonización, sus permanencias en las cercanías de las principales villas serían debidamente reglamentadas atendiendo sus inclinaciones, costumbres y el sustento de sus habitantes, concediéndoles terrenos a partir de lo dispuesto por Alonso de Cáceres, jurista y oidor de la Audiencia de Santo Domingo, en las ordenanzas municipales para el Ayuntamiento de La Habana, y el resto de ciudades y pueblos, a partir de su entrada en vigor en 1574.⁶

Más allá de las afirmaciones del exterminio indígena en el siglo XVI, con el objetivo de silenciar su existencia formal en informes y padrones oficiales remitidos a la metrópoli, atendiendo al interés económico de las lites locales en usurpar sus propiedades. En este sentido, las demandas y litigios de los distintos pueblos de indios contra la geofagia de hacendados y las autoridades coloniales, especialmente a lo largo del siglo XVIII, representaría un hecho incuestionable.⁷

Desde inicios del siglo XVII los “naturales” comenzarían a negociar su obediencia y servicios al gobierno colonial,⁸ y de manera gradual su vinculación en las labores defensivas pasarían a formar parte de su identidad en la compleja dinámica colonial. Si bien esta nueva correlación implicaría profundos cambios sociales en la escala de valores para los indígenas, como bien afirma Max Hering,

⁵ Según hemos constatado en nuestras investigaciones desde mediados del siglo XVI, y especialmente para el contexto habanero los indios naturales asentados en el pueblo de indios de Guanabacoa serían reconocidos bajo la calidad de “vecinos” responderá a cuestiones puntuales de índole económica y estratégica asegurando con sus vecindades no solo el abastecimiento de productos y servicios, sino también la disponibilidad de fuerzas en defender y vigilar las costas de las continuas alarmas de corsarios y piratas que causaban robos y daños a la villa. Véase: Archivo de la Oficina del Historiador de La Habana (en adelante AOHH), Actas Capitulares, junio de 1554, T. II, ff. 234-234v.

⁶ Véase: Francisco Domínguez Compañy: Ordenanzas municipales hispanoamericanas. Caracas 1982.

⁷ Constituirá una realidad a lo largo del siglo XVIII la lucha de los distintos pueblos de indios en la integridad de sus terrenos ante las usurpaciones a manos de ricos hacendados en alianza con las altas autoridades coloniales. Véase: Archivo General de Indias (en adelante AGI), Santo Domingo, 1617, 1618, 1619, 1620, 1621, 1622, autos sobre usurpaciones de las tierras de la Comunidad de Jiguani. AGI, Santo Domingo, 1612, 1613, 1614, 1615, denuncias de terrenos realengos de la comunidad de Guanabacoa.

⁸ Lilyam Padrón Reyes: Indios en la defensa marítima del espacio cubano. En: Revista Digital de la Real Academia Hispanoamericana de Ciencias, Artes y Letras 6 (2016), p. 110.

posibilitaría la construcción de un orden colonial bajo nuevas formas de poder más sutiles en controlar y perpetuar su dominación.⁹

En la comunidad de Los Caneyes, establecida en las cercanías de Santiago de Cuba, sus gobernadores reconocerían la utilidad en vincular parejas mixtas de vigías entre indios y españoles, relevando en tales encargos a la pareja de naturales que lo ejercían “desde siempre”, para una mejor gestión del servicio de vigías en la atalaya del Morro a la entrada de su puerto con un salario asignado de 4 reales diarios y 120 al mes.¹⁰

Igualmente, aprovechándose del imaginario en torno a la idea del “indio salvaje” diseminada por la Europa moderna, a partir de los viajes de descubrimientos continentales del siglo XV,¹¹ las autoridades hispanas utilizarían el recurso de las milicias de indios como elemento estratégico para mostrar “a sus gentes de la mar”. Cuál será el exotismo y bravura de estas fuerzas cuando el propio gobernador Pedro de Bayona (1664-1670) expresaría al respecto:

“[...] Siendo los naturales tan prácticos y ejercitados en las monterías, con tercios menos de gentes pudieran haber degollado al enemigo, y si la causa lo pidiese serán castigados y servirán de escarmiento [...] a cualquier clase de enemigos sin querer arriesgar las personas a causas tan relevantes como son la común defensa de la patria y servicio de su rey. Y lo mismo ocurre en las embarcaciones que apresan en todos estos mares entregándolas sin disparar un balazo de que se origina la insolencia en los piratas, pues no dudan con una embestir a una fragata”.¹²

Ante el insuficiente financiamiento de la plaza de Cuba, y su presidio desde sus primeros tiempos la disposición de las fuerzas de Los Caneyes representaría un alivio para el refuerzo de sus defensas. En tanto la demanda de sus servicios no significaría gastos en conceptos de salarios o mantenimiento, y bien que supondría una oportunidad de continuidad e inserción de los indígenas en el espacio colonial. A partir de sus actuaciones conseguirían ser eximidos de pagar renta alguna para el sustento de la iglesia de la comunidad, el propio gobernador don Francisco de

⁹ Max Hering Torres: *Color, pureza, raza: la calidad de los sujetos coloniales*. En: Heraclio Bonilla (ed.): *La cuestión colonial*. Bogotá 2011, p. 451

¹⁰ Pedro de Fonseca al rey. Santiago de Cuba, 2 de julio de 1628. AGI, Santo Domingo, 101, R. 2, No. 26.

¹¹ *La Imagen del Indio en la Europa Moderna*. Sevilla, 1990, pp. 350-371.

¹² Pedro de Bayona al rey. Santiago de Cuba, 8 de abril de 1668. AGI, Santo Domingo, 104, R. 5, No. 53.

la Vega (1678-1683) justificando sus asistencias a la salvaguarda de la villa solicitará formalmente a la Corona bajo la necesidad de que:

“[...] Estos naturales acuden con mucha puntualidad en las ocasiones que se ofrecen de enemigos y a limpiar la campaña del Castillo del Morro y otras funciones del Real Servicio con amor de vasallos de V.M. para que puedan ser aliviados de esta pensión V.M. como acostumbra en todas sus iglesias de las Indias se ha de servir de mostrar su propiedad en está sirviéndose de mandar situar la paga del cura en sus Reales Cajas y la luz del Santísimo Sacramento de los que evocan a S.M. en los diezmos de esta ciudad y con esta esperanza quedan estos miserables con algún consuelo y se alentarán con mayor valor en las ocasiones que se ofrezcan el servicio de S.M.”.¹³

Asimismo, hemos podido constatar en los juicios de residencias de diversos gobernadores, a modo de control sobre la gestión ejercida sobre el acontecer político y económico de la ciudad, que uno de los temas recurrentes del interés oficial giraría en torno al cuidado y buen tratamiento de los indios, estableciendo pautas fundamentales para que nadie se pudiese servir del trabajo de los indios “contra su voluntad o sin pagarles su trabajo”, ni usurparles sus territorios.¹⁴ Respecto a tales advertencias, lo relacionado por los distintos gobernadores sentaría el precedente en declarar abiertamente los oficios en que eran empleados los naturales, como limpiar la campaña del Morro, vigilar los caminos más peligrosos de la mar a la ciudad, servicios de mensajería, así como guardar las costas. Unido a sus múltiples utilidades enfatizarían que a todos se les pagaba sus debidos servicios, y no perderían la oportunidad en considerar que no correspondía fuesen mantenidos bajo la categoría de indios, pues eran casi españoles por sus costumbres y su proceder.¹⁵

Como apuntarán los historiadores Juan Marchena y Carmen Gómez, los dominios del rey debían ser defendidos siguiendo la premisa de que la pérdida de una porción de territorio americano no representaba solo una afrenta al monarca,

¹³ Carta del gobernador Francisco Guerra de la Vega al rey. Santiago de Cuba, 9 de enero de 1679. AGI, Santo Domingo, 106, R. 2, No. 61.

¹⁴ Residencia de Pedro de Bayona, gobernador y capitán a guerra de Santiago de Cuba, por Andrés Magaña, su sucesor. 1669. AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 85^a-85b.

¹⁵ Residencia de Francisco de la Guerra y de la Vega, gobernador y capitán de guerra de Santiago de Cuba, por Gil Correoso Catalán, su sucesor en dichos cargos. 1682. AGI, Escribanía de Cámara, 87^a.

sino la pérdida de la soberanía sobre una porción del reino. Defender América, y particularmente el Caribe hispano frente a las continuas amenazas de corsarios y piratas franceses e ingleses en las costas cubanas se transformará así, más que antes, en una cuestión de Estado.¹⁶ De esta forma la participación indígena sería legitimada en la posibilidad de sentar plaza en los cupos de la plaza de Cuba, y que estuviese compuesta de españoles, criollos y naturales de la provincia aprovechándose los conocimientos de la tierra y el manejo de las lanzas y machetes en las emboscadas de gran interés para el combate frente al enemigo.¹⁷

La vida cotidiana de guarnición representaría la total entrega de los naturales a las labores castrenses, bajo condiciones de alojamiento precarias, y un pago diario de tres y medio reales que les obligaría a desatender sus actividades económicas. Según Leví Marrero, estos pocos ingresos lejos de otorgarle algún reconocimiento social o militar a los indios le convertirán en un grupo marginal.¹⁸ No obstante de la deplorable convivencia, y las largas horas de guardia y centinelas en los presidios y fortalezas, era preferible asegurar la subsistencia antes que verse condenados a la pobreza de una comunidad arruinada y despojada de sus mejores terrenos por la oligarquía terrateniente local. Como bien denunciara el protector de indios de los Caneyes Luis de Uña Muga, a comienzos del siglo XVIII:

“[...] y tan estrechísimamente calamitosos que no pueden fabricar la mitad de casas, o chozas que requiere el gentío de naturales de cuya inopia han prevenido algunos escándalos, [...] es mi gran desdicha Señor, haber quedado estos naturales sin tierras comunes que les puedan servir para sus labranzas, porque aunque tienen al censo las más provechosas inconsideradamente, como en algún tiempo estuvieron sin protector, y los que les asistieron antes de mi entrada, o no encontraron remedio con que desempeñar las obligaciones del cargo, o atendieron solo mal quitarse con los vecinos de la ciudad que tuvieron ocasión de introducirse a ocupar la mayor y más útil parte de la tierra por unos precios tan ínfimos que los dejó enormísimamente lesos”.¹⁹

¹⁶ La vida de guarnición en las ciudades americanas de la ilustración. Madrid 1992, p.12.

¹⁷ Al gobernador de Cuba ordenándole que las 60 plazas de que se compone la Compañía de Campaña de aquel presidio sean de españoles, criollos y naturales de aquella provincia. Madrid, 9 de junio de 1695. AGI, Santo Domingo, 333.

¹⁸ Leví Marrero: Cuba economía y sociedad. Madrid 1975, T.V, pp. 22-23.

¹⁹ El protector de los indios del pueblo de San Luis de los Caneyes. Santiago de Cuba, 8 de noviembre de 1726. AGI, Santo Domingo, 422.

Ya fuesen empleados en las guarniciones, los sitios de costa o sirvieran en los distintos cuerpos de milicias desde fines del siglo XVI la realidad social de los naturales permanecería casi invariable a lo largo del siglo XVIII. En la medida en que entren a efectos en la isla las reformas borbónicas del monarca Carlos III como forma de consolidar el dominio y soberanía de la Corona española en sus territorios de Ultramar la participación de los indígenas en las tareas defensivas sería reforzada a partir de la necesidad y disponibilidad de fuerzas para los cuerpos de milicias disciplinadas.



Fig. 2. Ubicación geográfica de los pueblos de San Luis de los Caneyes y San Pablo de Jiguaní, siglo XVIII. Fuente: AGI, Santo Domingo-Mapas y planos, 608.

En la región oriental, a inicios del siglo XVIII, con la fundación oficial del pueblo de indios de San Pablo de Jiguaní en 1701, enclavado entre las ciudades de Bayamo y Santiago de Cuba, se intentaría conseguir un punto defensivo interior que reorganizase varios cuerpos de milicias que sirvieran como refuerzo específicamente en la defensa de las costas de Santiago de Cuba de las acciones foráneas, y las tentativas del comercio de contrabando bayamés hacia la mar. Junto con la otrora comunidad de San Luis de los Caneyes representarían los abanderados de la defensa marítima, a partir de sus compañías de milicias y tropas en las fortificaciones (Fig. 2). Proteger el espacio cubano de las amenazas exter-

nas, era por extensión defender a la Corona hispana y reafirmar su fiel vasallaje. Precisamente en la consolidación de tales prestaciones los indígenas cristalizarían su identidad en el espacio colonial, y darían paso a la perpetuación de la entidad jurisdiccional del imperio español a través del sistema defensivo y las milicias regladas en la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII.²⁰

DEBATES Y CONTRADICCIONES EN TORNO A UN PROYECTO

La integración de los indios o naturales al nuevo proyecto de milicias emprendidas en Cuba a lo largo de la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII, representaría para las autoridades coloniales una premisa, a partir de su activa participación en la defensa en coyunturas donde los peligros de ataque o invasión del enemigo eran notables desde el siglo XVI. Atendiendo a ello, el puntual reconocimiento de sus servicios y prestaciones tomaría cuerpo a partir de 1764, cuando serían convocadas las milicias antiguas de las poblaciones de Jiguaní y Los Caneyes. Tales llamamientos despertarían viejos prejuicios en torno a la figura del indio y la concepción de sus privilegios en el seno de la sociedad colonial. Bajo tales calidades sólo habían gentes mestizadas con negros y pardos, que mantenían el status como “pueblo de indios” por el interés económico de la tierra, y por ser amparo efectivo para vagos y malhechores.²¹

El nuevo proyecto de milicias iniciaría un paradójico debate que giraría en torno a la imposibilidad de clasificar a los nuevos voluntarios en la categoría de blancos o pardos, según las categorías establecidas para los nuevos milicianos, y sería analizado como:

“[...] Esta clase de gente, ni puede agregarse a los blancos, por no ser puramente indios naturales, ni a los pardos por estar recibidas las poblaciones de que son en aquella clase, sobre este supuesto proponemos la consideración como un medio entre blancos y pardos que puede emplearse en tiempo de guerra en el manejo de la artillería y trabajos, que se ofrezcan, sin que por esto dejen de instruirse en el ejercicio como ventaja conocida sin tocar a los batallones de blancos, pardos, ni compañías de caballerías”.²²

²⁰ Olga Portuondo Zúñiga: Una derrota británica en Cuba. Santiago de Cuba 2015, p.109.

²¹ Marrero: Cuba economía y sociedad, T. VI, pp. 12-13.

²² Proyecto sobre las reformas de las compañías disciplinadas de los pueblos de Jiguaní y San Luis de los Caneyes. Cuba, 7 de abril de 1767. Archivo Nacional de Cuba (en adelante ANC), Correspondencia de los Capitanes Generales, leg. 9, exp. 23.

La categoría aplicada a los indios sería equiparable a la de los blancos, al menos formalmente. A pesar de las muchas discrepancias respecto a su condición, una realidad que no daba lugar a dudas era su probada utilidad y vasallaje a la Corona. A partir de ello se darán pasos para su integración en el nuevo sistema. Asimismo, para el indio, su inserción en las milicias no representaría un asunto ajeno de sus intereses, en tanto les permitiría conservar y adquirir numerosos privilegios a través de la pertenencia corporativa conocida como “fuero militar”.

Teniendo en cuenta estas consideraciones, las concepciones excepcionales y las connotaciones legales reforzarían las condiciones sociales vinculadas al nuevo orden estamental. En este sentido, ambas comunidades servirán atentamente a los intereses oficiales, y con atención a ello se enviaría un pormenorizado informe de cada uno de los voluntarios de todas sus compañías con distinción de edad, oficio, estado social y características físicas.

A partir de los detalles implícitos en sus listas, podremos constatar las relaciones de poder a través del prisma del cuerpo en que serán reconocidos los alistados en las milicias. Es notorio en las descripciones de los numerosos combatientes la mención de las ocasiones en que habían servido a la Corona en la defensa de las costas, y junto a ello numerosos detalles de tallaje, complexión física, y capacidad intelectual, lo que nos denota el riguroso control político de cada uno de los milicianos. En la misma medida, significará una forma de intervención social que se aplicaría con arreglo a las normas establecidas y, como reafirmación de sujeto activo en atención al binomio consentimiento/resistencia según los criterios aportados por Max Hering.²³ En buena medida, sus reclutamientos significarían una disyuntiva que les llevaría a determinar un nuevo estatuto, que alteraría sus escalas valores tradiciones e identitarios donde el llamado “blanqueamiento”, serviría para borrar los caracteres indígenas “inferiores” como garantía de total integración a los valores hispanos, apreciados por su superioridad intrínseca. Por todo ello, y como vasallos “leales a su rey” representaría para los naturales un beneficio ser considerados en los nuevos alistamientos, y su inclusión en las revistas militares darían lugar a que fuesen percibidos y reconocidos por el mando oficial como vecinos que cumplían con su deber ante la Corona.²⁴

²³ Max Hering Torres: *Cuerpos anómalos*. Bogotá 2008.

²⁴ Véase: Javier Ruiz Ibáñez: *Introducción*. En Javier Ruiz Ibáñez (ed.): *Las milicias del rey de España*. México D.F. 2009, pp. 1-41.

Frente a la reorganización del sistema de milicias, el problema de la gobernabilidad despertaría inquietudes por conocer con profundidad las fuerzas y recursos disponibles. Aquellas preocupaciones tendrían como consecuencia directa que desde 1772, se comiencen a levantar pormenorizadas relaciones de todos los pueblos y lugares de la isla de Cuba, con un marcado interés militar, económico o político como continuidad de las reformas ilustradas emprendidas desde 1763 por el Conde de Rícla. En lo concerniente a las poblaciones de Jiguaní y Los Caneyes, las categorías del padrón que se manejarían internamente, experimentarían sustanciales variaciones respecto al que se remitirían a la Corona al omitirse la clasificación de indios, que por el contrario, si encontráramos en el remitido al gobernador general de la isla.²⁵

Las explicaciones de tales variaciones podemos sustentarlas en la intención de ocultar ante el mando oficial las verdaderas cifras de indios o naturales, en vista de sus protecciones y amparos por las legislaciones vigentes en toda la América hispana. A partir de ello, numerosos ejemplos nos atestiguan que el conocimiento de la realidad cubana no era ajeno a los intereses metropolitanos. Siendo así, trastocar dichas calidades e incluir a los indios como “blancos” formaría parte del

Tabla 1. Datos de población de los pueblos de Jiguaní y Los Caneyes (1775-1778)

Población	Blancos	Indios	Negros Esclavos	Negros libres	Pardos Libres	Total
Los Caneyes	21	528	2	1	18	570
Jiguaní	2	779	24	-	39	840
Total	23	1307	26	1	57	1410

Fuente: ANC, Gobierno General, leg. 489, exp. 25122;
Miscelánea de Expedientes, leg. 782, exp. 420.

²⁵ María Ángeles Meriño Fuentes y Aisnara Perera Díaz: Calidad y mestizaje en los padrones de vecinos de San Luis del Caney y Santiago de Cuba (1775-1800). En: El Taller de la Historia 7, no.7, (2015), pp.101-140; Padrón de vecinos del pueblo de San Luis de los Caneyes (1775). ANC, Gobierno General, leg. 489, exp. 25122,.

juego de poderes y control de las autoridades coloniales, y favorecería que los naturales fuesen incluidos posteriormente dentro de las milicias de infantería como blancos.

Si observamos la Tabla 1, podemos observar como el 92,69 % del total de habitantes de ambas localidades se auto-reconocerían o serían determinados como indios, de ahí su importancia demográfica de cara a su elevado potencial en el alistamiento de las milicias disciplinadas. Las cifras contenidas y manejadas en los padrones internos y los posteriores informes remitidos a la Corona nos señalarían numerosas contradicciones, especialmente en el año 1778, cuando se haría la total omisión de la categoría de indios (Tabla 2). En su lugar todos serían declarados como blancos, e incluidos en las compañías de infantería sin aparente diferenciación formal.

Tabla 2. Datos de población masculina de los pueblos de Jiguaní y Los Caneyes (1778)

Población	Blancos	Negros esclavos	Negros Libres	Pardos Libres	Total
Los Caneyes	239	2	5	46	292
Jiguaní	519	15	5	137	676
Total	758	17	10	183	968

Fuente: Elaboración propia. AGI, Papeles de Cuba, 1297.

Durante los siglos XVI-XVII, los indios serían considerados un grupo marginal en el seno de la sociedad colonial cubana, carentes de personalidad jurídica y tutelados por los llamados “protectores de indios”. Por tanto, su inclusión dentro del cuerpo de milicias disciplinadas como “blancos” supondría para las autoridades coloniales una gran contradicción ya que otorgaría cierta legitimidad a las comunidades reconocidas oficialmente bajo la categoría de “pueblo de indios”, que seguirían disfrutando de sus plenos derechos y amparos según lo dispuesto en las Leyes de Indias.²⁶

²⁶ A lo largo del siglo XVIII sería motivo de continuas quejas y largas disputas la tenencia de la tierra entre las comunidades de Jiguaní y Los Caneyes, y los representantes de las oligarquías locales, donde la Corona siempre tomará partido en dictar leyes de amparo y restitución a favor de estos pueblos de indios, y recordará a los protectores de indios y las autoridades oficiales su deber y responsabilidad en preservar los derechos y provisiones de estas poblaciones. Véase:



Fig. 3. Diseño del uniforme de las milicias blancas de Santiago de Cuba y Bayamo (1764).

Fuente: AGI, MP-Uniformes, 22.

Otro de los aspectos fundamentales experimentados como parte de la nueva reforma militar, vendría determinado en los uniformes que deberían vestir los nuevos cuerpos de milicias. Quedaría decretado desde los primeros momentos que los costes debían ser a título personal por cada uno de los voluntarios. Las nuevas insignias y distintivos de cada uno de los batallones identificarían cada una de las unidades, y al mismo tiempo como bien afirmase María del Carmen Barcia, significaría un orgullo para los sectores marginados como negros, mulatos e indios lucir tales emblemas que vendrían a representar el símbolo más visible del prestigio que habían conseguido, y el nuevo papel que ocupaban y desempeñaban para

Pleitos y amparos de tierra a los pueblos de San Luis de los Caneyes y San Pablo de Jiguani (1690-1783). AGI, Audiencia de Santo Domingo, leg. 1617, 1618, 1619, 1620, 1621, 1622, 1488, 408.

el conjunto de la sociedad colonial.²⁷ En este sentido, se decretaría que estos batallones usarían el mismo uniforme que los de blancos y pardos de Cuba, es decir, para no hacer distinción entre sus combatientes, y evitar que los primeros se sintiesen discriminados respecto al cuerpo de voluntarios.²⁸

Conforme a las mismas indicaciones, en lo referente al equipamiento defensivo la Corona se comprometería en aportar las armas para todos los batallones, las cuales deberían ser resguardadas en los ayuntamientos de cada localidad con el fin de preservar que tuvieran uso más allá del oficial que les era reservado.²⁹ Entendemos que tales previsiones para las poblaciones de Los Caneyes y Jiguaní responderán a la continuidad de las prohibiciones en la tenencia de armas que proseguirían el gobierno colonial en ambas localidades como garantía del orden y poder ante posibles rebeldías a semejanza de las ocurridas anteriormente.

HACIA LA CONSOLIDACIÓN DE UN STATUS COLONIAL

Un caso particular del conflicto de intereses surgido a raíz de las nuevas interpretaciones podemos encontrarlo en el pleito sostenido y declarado a fines del siglo XVIII (1799). Fueron el teniente y subteniente de milicias Clemente Tamayo y Pedro Pérez, indios de Los Caneyes, de oficio labradores, que denunciaron contra el gobernador departamental y el capitán de milicias de Bayamo y Santiago de Cuba Antonio Ros, por supuestas injurias y graves daños a los de su clase. El pleito fue ocasionado por la decisión del oficial encargado de enviar a Tamayo ocho días a prisión, ante una supuesta falta de disciplina.³⁰ Ante tales quejas, las autoridades coloniales justificarían su actuación exponiendo la caracterización del

²⁷ María del Carmen Barcia: *Los ilustres apellidos: negros en la Habana colonial*. La Habana 2009, p. 262.

²⁸ Comunicación del capitán Rafael de Acuña al gobernador general de la isla de Cuba sobre la conformación de las nuevas milicias. Santiago de Cuba, 4 de enero de 1767. ANC, Correspondencia de los capitanes generales, leg. 16, exp. 133.

²⁹ Gustavo Placer Cervera: *Ejército y Milicias en Cuba colonial (1763-1783)*. La Habana, 2015, p. 61.

³⁰ Expediente de la queja de Clemente Tamayo y Pedro Pérez, teniente y subteniente de la Compañía de Milicias Urbanas del pueblo de Caney contra el gobernador de Cuba y el teniente de milicias de Cuba y Bayamo Antonio Ros. Cuba, 26 de mayo de 1799. Archivo General de Simancas (en adelante AGS), Secretaria del Estado y del Despacho de la Guerra, leg. 6864, exp. 53.

teniente Tamayo en la condición de un “hombre enteramente díscolo y genio voraz e insultante”. Al hacerlo, defenderían ante la justicia colonial que la propia naturaleza de estos naturales les hacía recurrir en estas faltas, por lo cual no eran fuerzas confiables a la Corona. Precisamente, una vez más el imaginario social jugará un papel transgresor en reconocer a los indios como “gente bulliciosa, vaga, rebelde y sin apego a las normas”, sin distinción de oficio o responsabilidad ante su comunidad.³¹

Si bien la querrela no tendría una resolución favorable al teniente Tamayo, su auto-defensa ante la Corona declarando abiertamente los agravios que soportarían los de su clase de parte de autoridades coloniales como gobernadores y sus subalternos nos sirve como pretexto para analizar en su conjunto como la inserción de los naturales en las milicias disciplinadas estimularía que este segmento de la población, tradicionalmente marginada y mal vista, pudiese cobrar un nuevo protagonismo y expresar a través de su pertenencia a las milicias su identidad local y demostrar su plena integración al sistema colonial, lo que les favorecía en su lucha por defender ante el poder oligárquico sus intereses personales y colectivos.³² Los nombramientos en el cuerpo de milicia no les aportarían sustanciales beneficios económicos, no obstante, les abriría la posibilidad de la movilidad social frente al conjunto de habitantes de la comunidad.

De igual forma, podemos corroborarlo en los distintos pleitos sostenidos a razón de la posesión de las tierras de las poblaciones de Jiguani y Los Caneyes desde fines del siglo XVIII. Los naturales se defenderán de las acusaciones y la geografía de las élites locales alegando en sus representaciones el derecho natural que les ocupaba en la posesión de los terrenos desde tiempos inmemoriales, y sus actuaciones en favor del rey en la protección de sus intereses en perjuicio de sus actividades y labranzas.³³ Observamos como la consolidación del status colonial asimilado por los indios o naturales representaría la capacidad de negociar sus lealtades y servicios ya fuesen como actores individuales o colectivos, y en la

³¹ Marrero: Cuba economía y sociedad, T. VI, pp. 11-12.

³² El capitán general de Cuba da cuenta de la resulta de la representación de Clemente Tamayo y Pedro Pérez, Habana, 18 de enero de 1798. AGS, Secretaria del Estado y del Despacho de la Guerra, leg. 6864, exp. 53.

³³ Representación de los indios de Jiguani y El Caney por el desapropio de sus tierras, San Ildefonso 9 de octubre de 1777. AGI, Santo Domingo, leg. 1617, exp. 3.

misma medida como forma de reconocer sus cualidades y justificar su permanencia en la reconfiguración del espacio colonial del siglo XVIII.

Con una fuerte tradición en las gestiones defensivas, para los naturales ejercer su deber en las milicias no conllevaría un propósito novedoso, pero sería un contexto favorable para reafirmar la existencia y consolidación de sus comunidades estrechamente ligadas a sus prestaciones y utilidades prácticas al mando oficial. De esta forma, ya como indios, naturales o blancos, continuarían siendo un elemento necesario en proteger los intereses metropolitanos de conjunto con la táctica y estrategia de la política miliciana, que se vería reforzada por una marcada jerarquía colonial como mecanismo de control social en reafirmar valores como la lealtad, la disciplina y el respeto a la autoridad.

Valiéndose de tales prerrogativas, los naturales encontrarán en la “carrera de las armas” una salida honorable y muy efectiva, que les asegurará un sustento y la oportunidad de adquirir un *status quo*, según las condiciones desarrolladas. Muchas veces conseguirán las máximas graduaciones, recorriendo todas las etapas previas desde soldado o alférez de la compañía, lo que en cierta medida también iría en paralelo a la adquisición de una posición económica, que aunque no era equiparable a la de un miembro del Estado Mayor del Real Ejército, era interesante en el mantenimiento de otras fuentes de financiamiento, como dueños de estancias y corrales.

REFLEXIONES FINALES

La situación del indio en el entorno colonial durante estos primeros siglos, se materializaría a partir de la interacción entre sí y con el colonizador, produciéndose respuestas múltiples a esta dominación entre las que se incluye el reordenamiento de sus identidades o la aparición de identidades nuevas bajo la auto-representación del indio natural. De ahí, el gran poder de negociación y adaptación en su pervivencia más allá del siglo XVI. Las circunstancias de sus entornos nos revelan una sociedad colonial diversa, inserta en una profunda interrelación donde blancos, mulatos, negros, indios y mestizos conformarán un mosaico intercultural, donde ser indio significaría junto a una condición étnica una categoría social, que podía variar de acuerdo al interés personal u oficial.

Apelando a los ejemplos antes expuestos, nos podemos debatir hasta qué punto la iniciativa de acceder al indio tendrá correspondencia con la dinámica local,

según las circunstancias sociales y políticas en que serán percibidos, y que no estarán exentas de múltiples contradicciones entre las normas y la práctica en que ejercerán sus labores. Para el orden colonial, el indio, representará un recurso interesante, que constantemente era recordado a sus autoridades de su responsabilidad en el amparo y protección.

Para el conjunto de los pueblos de San Luis de los Caneyes y San Pablo de Jiguaní, en el imaginario colectivo de su representación, la concepción del indio miliciano, vendría a representar una parte indiscutible de su identidad. Las profundas dificultades relacionadas con sus servicios y su inserción en la sociedad colonial nos hacen reflexionar sobre la capacidad dinamizadora del indio, como un grupo que al margen de la sociedad formal sería clave para la estabilidad del modelo colonial en la región. Su adaptabilidad al medio social les valdría en reconocer sus intereses ante el despojo y la invisibilidad de las autoridades y élites locales, y a su vez, negociar su ascenso posterior a los núcleos del poder institucional español.

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NOELLE RICHARDSON

**Petitions, Privileges and Protection: “Performative Subjecthood”
and the Use of Colonial Legal Mechanisms by Hindu Merchants
in the Portuguese *Estado da Índia*, 1750–1830**

This chapter examines the use of colonial legal mechanisms by Hindu merchants in the Portuguese *Estado da Índia* between 1750 and 1830. As the expansion of Portuguese imperial rule broadened the economic horizons of these merchants, as colonial subjects, they regularly appropriated and employed the “formal” judicial framework and legal mechanisms of the colonial state, in combination with “informal” mechanisms such as the role of trust, social capital, or other customary norms of behavior, in order to protect and manage their commercial interests. The judicial framework of the *Estado* provided a range of regulatory and enforcement mechanisms, as well as the channels and forums for legal recourse and conflict mediation in which the state was the sought after final mediator or third-party arbitrator. Petitions were the legal mechanism that was most employed by Hindu merchants to protect and advocate for their commercial interests. Through this channel they appealed for privileges and honors, petitioned for the protection of their religious and cultural rights, for the appointment of specific political and administrative posts, articulated grievances or concerns, appealed for clemency, applied for legal redress, or appealed for the state to intervene in commercial disputes.¹ In these petitions, Hindu merchants

¹ It is important to note that Hindu merchants in the Portuguese *Estado* were not the only colonial subjects to use the petition for such means. By the late eighteenth century native petitioners in British colonial Madras, for example, petitioned the state for relief from rent to claims to land, property, the protection and support of religious institutions and the proper conduct of ceremonies and festivals, see Aparna Balachandran: *Petition Town: Law Custom, Urban Space in Colonial South India*. In: Aparna Balachandran, Rashmi Pant and Bhavani Raman (eds.): *Iterations of Law: Legal Histories from India*. Oxford 2018, pp. 147-168. For further scholarship on petitioning by colonial subjects in South Asia, see, for example, Lakshmi Subramaniam: *A trial in transition: courts, merchants and identities in western India, circa 1800*. In: *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 4, no. 3 (2004), pp. 269-292; Philip J. Stern: *Power, Petitions and the ‘Povo’ in Early English Bombay*. In: Balachandran, Pant and Raman (eds.): *Iterations of Law*, pp. 187-210; Potukuchi Swarnalatha: *Revolt, Testimony, Petition: Artisanal Protests in Colonial Andhra*. In: Lex Heerma Van Voss (ed.):

through a kind of “performative subjecthood,” self-fashioned themselves as virtuous, loyal and invaluable subjects who were meritorious of the state’s attention and clemency. A close analysis of the form, discourse and content of these petitions and the responses to them thus offers us a rare opportunity with which to clearly hear the voice and agency of colonial subjects, and to better understand the factors that compelled them to petition, as well as the manner in which they represented themselves vis-à-vis the colonial state.

The colonial state exerted an overarching authority that helped to regulate, protect and adjudicate the commercial activities and interests of Hindu merchants in the *Estado*. However, we know next to nothing of the impact of the Portuguese colonial juridical structures on the colonial society of the *Estado*, nor of the ways in which its colonized subjects responded to the imposition of colonial legal provisions and how they utilized them to their own advantage.² The judicial framework of the *Estado* provided these merchants with a stable setting in which the institutions of the colonial state provided protection and patronage, as well as the institutional guarantees in the form of binding laws and the codification of legal and commercial documents, which provided and enforced guarantees that helped ensure that all parties in a commercial transaction lived up to their obligations. Choosing to operate within this framework was a rational calculation on the part of these merchants and a crucial element of their overall commercial strategy. As such, it was, as Douglass North has argued, a form of “individual wealth-maximizing behavior”, as the relatively stable institutional setting of the *Estado* helped to reduce the uncertainties involved in cooperate dealings thus increasing security and reducing transaction and production costs.³

Petitions in Social History. International Review of Social History Supplements. Cambridge 2001, pp. 107-129; Majid Siddiqi: The British Historical Context and Petitioning in Colonial India. Delhi 2005; James Jaffe: Appeals and the Language of Petitioning. In: James Jaffe (ed.): Ironies of Colonial Governance: Law, Custom and Justice in Colonial India. Cambridge 2015, pp. 77-101.

² A clear exception to this is Lauren Benton’s short discussion of “Hindus as Legal Subjects in Goa” in Lauren Benton: Law and Colonial Cultures: Local Regimes in World History, 1400–1900. Cambridge 2004, pp. 114-124.

³ Douglass North: Institutions. In: The Journal of Economic Perspectives 5, no.1 (1991), p. 98.

As active and successful litigants, it is clear that Hindu merchants perfected the art of petitioning and were able to exert their influence and lobby for their interests in a manner that was in line with the fact that they were the most visible and dominant section of the indigenous population in the colonial society of the *Estado* during this period. Importantly, these merchants held a clear burden of expectation towards the state in regards to what they believed to be its responsibilities and duties of protection and patronage towards them as subjects, and readily invoked this obligation when it best served their interests.⁴ By virtue of their commercial worth, Portuguese colonial officials simply could not afford to ignore the concerns, grievances, or requests articulated in their petitions and were conscious of the fact that the information provided in them could be of benefit to the state. As a result, they are a clear and unique example with which to explore the continuous and systematic interaction of an indigenous commercial actor with a European colonial institution in a manner that was less confrontational and antagonistic, and thus more mutually beneficial and nuanced than in other colonial contexts in the period under consideration.⁵

THE VALUE OF HINDU MERCHANTS AS COMMERCIAL AGENTS

As subjects of the colonial state in Goa, Hindu merchants were enmeshed in the commercial network of the Portuguese overseas empire, whose networks connected them to markets within the wider Indian Ocean and South China Sea,

⁴ In this regard, the Hindu merchants of the *Estado* shared much in common with the Anglo-Banian mercantile community of late eighteenth century and nineteenth century Surat, whose perception of, and engagement with, the political authority of the English East India Company was primarily structured “by their sense of the Company as their overall protector and patron, and their own dependent status as clients” and their expectations of security and good governance, see Subramaniam: A trial in transition, pp. 275-277.

⁵ Between 1770 and 1820 in colonial Andhra Pradesh, for example, the relationship between handloom weavers and the incipient colonial state and the English East India Company was largely antagonistic and confrontational. In their opposition to the structural changes and detrimental practices implemented by the Company during this period, these weavers staged four major disturbances or revolts in 1775, 1796, 1798, and 1816 and it was only over the course of time did these weavers gradually employ the petition as the dominant mode of expressing their grievances, see Swarnalatha: Revolt, Testimony, Petition, pp. 107-129.

and across the Atlantic to Brazil and Europe.⁶ Within the Indian subcontinent and its coastal zones from Goa, Hindu merchants conducted trade into the hinterland with Balagate in Bijapur and Pune. To the north of Goa, they established trade links with the growing British port of Bombay, Daman and Diu (also territories of the *Estado da Índia*), and the wider region of Gujarat but Surat in particular. To the south of Goa along the Malabar coast they had commercial contacts and conducted trade with the Portuguese *feitoria* or trading factory at Mangalore, as well as Tellicherry, Calicut, Mahé and Cochin. Along the Coromandel coast they conducted trade with Madras, the French settlement of Pondicherry, as well as Pulicat, Masulipatnam and Bengal. Within the wider Indian Ocean, there existed small commercial ties with Ceylon and along the east African coast, specifically with the Portuguese colony of Mozambique (officially part of the *Estado da Índia* until its separation in 1752), as well as with the French settlements in Mauritius and Maldives. Across the South China Sea, they also conducted trade with the Portuguese colonies of Macao, which they used as a base for the wider China trade and to a much lesser extent, Timor. In the same region, there was a trickle of trade to Batavia and Acheh. Across to the Atlantic, these merchants held trade links with Brazil and of course to the metropole, Lisbon. These merchants, who due to their status as Hindus the Portuguese labelled as “*gentios*” or gentiles, were quick to take advantage of their broadened economic horizons and were cognizant of the benefits that were to be derived from colonial trade.

Their crucial role in the procurement and supply of valuable commodities such as textiles, spices, and ivory for the import and export trade in and out of Goa, coupled with their commercial acumen and their role as middlemen and brokers for the Portuguese with other indigenous mercantile communities, meant that they were dominant and indispensable players in the colonial economy of the *Estado*. Furthermore, the revenue generated from their trade helped to sustain the lagging colonial economy, and this, coupled with their ability to extend loans to the *Fazenda Real* (royal treasury) and supply the State with crucial provisions during emergencies, resulted in a complex relationship based

⁶ For more information regarding the trading world of Hindu merchants during the eighteenth century see, for example, Celsa Pinto: *Trade and Finance in Portuguese India: A Study of the Portuguese Country Trade (1770–1840)*. New Delhi 1994; M.N. Pearson: *Goa-based Seaborn Trade (17th–18th Centuries)*. In: Teotónio de Souza (ed.): *Goa Through the Ages: An Economic History*, Vol. 2, Goa 1990.

on what Celsa Pinto has called “a mutual dependency nexus.”⁷ In a similar vein, their economic value to the state was such that, as Lauren Benton has described, even during the open persecution of Hindus during the sixteenth century, it provided some incentive for controlling abuses against them.⁸ As their economic value increased and the relative economic power of the *Estado* decreased over the course of the following centuries, this incentive steadily intensified and gained considerable traction in the eighteenth century.

The period beginning from the mid-eighteenth onwards was particularly beneficial to commercial actors in Goa due to a host of reforms instituted by the Marquis of Pombal between 1750–1777 aimed at reviving the *Estado* by stimulating and liberalizing commerce.⁹ These waves of reforms were the result of the sweeping mercantilist policies of the Marquis of Pombal, which favored merchants and sought to stimulate private trade.¹⁰ The implementation of Pombaline reforms in Goa ushered in a new era of practical pragmatism, in which the efforts to revitalize and expand commerce were paralleled with a concern to preserve existing profitable sources of wealth and commercial activity, particularly the trade and capital of indigenous communities such as Hindu merchants. In sum, changing attitudes on the part of the state reflected in a reinforced pragmatism and an overwhelming preoccupation with stimulating commerce, coupled with their awareness of the commercial worth of their *gentio* merchants meant that they became indispensable to a colonial state that began to prioritize commerce over religious proselytizing. This in turn greatly increased its flexibility and its receptiveness to the petitions submitted by Hindu merchants and, to their great advantage, it also increased the state’s willingness to heed their concerns or requests. Given their close interactions with the state, these merchants were highly conscious of their indispensability and were confident in explicitly referencing their political and commercial value to the *Estado* as the starting point from which to state their demands.

⁷ Pinto: Trade and Finance, p. 100.

⁸ Benton: Law and Colonial Cultures, p. 123.

⁹ Pombal’s reforms set the foundation for further reforms instituted in the early 1780s, which “acted as a catalyst for commercial revival in the empire,” see Pedro Machado: *Ocean of Trade: South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, c.1750–1850*. Cambridge 2014, p. 29; Celsa Pinto: *A Commercial Resurgence, 1770–1830*. Tellicherry 2003.

¹⁰ Maria de Jesus dos Mártires Lopes: *Tradition and Modernity in Eighteenth-Century Goa (1750–1800)*. New Delhi 2006, p. 73.

Their importance as commercial subjects was also strongly acknowledged and referenced by the state itself. For example, a letter from the king Dom Pedro II to the viceroy Caetano de Melo de Castro, dated March 14, 1704, in response to a series of petitions submitted by Hindus that had asked the king to pass a new provision to confirm that they were allowed to conduct their weddings with the assistance of priests and other ceremonial rights, began by stating that they were “the vassals who are so obedient, that they do not falter in their *cabedades* which they offer to this State in all the occasions of necessity, giving considerable quantities for the wars.”¹¹ Similarly, a deliberation authored by the prosecutor of justice (*Promotor de Justiça*) Jozé Antonio Ribeiro de Motta that accompanied a response to a petition filed by the Hindu merchant Soirea Sinay in 1766, in which he sought permission for the use of *gaitas* and other instruments to accompany the wedding of his son to the daughter of a fellow merchant Narana Sinay, included a lengthy discussion of the damaging effects of present restrictions on the weddings of *gentios* on the *Estado*.¹² It was argued that in response to being prevented from conducting their weddings with full ceremonial rights and accompanied by instruments such as *gaitas*, Hindu merchants and *botica* owners would close down their shops and send their wives and families to the lands of the idolaters and with them went “tax revenue farmers of the royal revenues.”¹³ Moreover, he concluded that the “leaseholders that are left cannot comply with the conditions of their lease or compensate for the revenue lost.”¹⁴ As a result, the closure of the *boticas* meant a fall in revenues, which was detrimental to the *Fazenda Real* and this caused quite the concern amongst the *Procurador* (Crown Attorney) and ministers of the *Fazenda Real*, as well as the viceroy.¹⁵ He claimed therefore that it was only a person “with very short term perspective” that allowed these *gentios* to leave instead of “conserving them in

¹¹ The word *cabedal* can be roughly translated as assets, both financially in the form of money or capital, or physical assets in the form of goods or commodities. Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon (hereafter AHU), Índia, Cx. 121, Doc. 82.

¹² A *gaita* was a horn like instrument comparable to a back pipe. A *botica* was a local retail shop that sold a variety of goods from basic foodstuffs and provisions to textiles and spices, see Sebastião Rodolpho Dalgado: *Glossário Luso-Asiático*. Coimbra 1919, p. 140. AHU, Índia, Cx. 134, Doc. 94.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

the *Estado*” which would “maintain the contracts and the increase of the Royal Revenues” and the “donations that they had provided for the public need.”¹⁶

The *Promotor*, evidently swayed primarily by economic concerns, was sympathetic to the demands articulated in the petition and concluded that they should be granted, as “preserving the economy of the *Estado* was more urgent than preventing the spread of *gentilismo*” or gentilism. These combined statements clearly reflect the extent to which the pragmatic commercial concerns of the period were paramount and the manner in which they could influence and even override socio-cultural or religious matters. Moreover, the fact that the second petition was filed by a merchant – a detail which was highlighted in the preamble – is evidence that he was emphasizing his status as a merchant and wielding his commercial weight in order to influence its outcome.

HINDU MERCHANTS, “PERFORMATIVE SUBJECTHOOD” AND THE ART OF PETITIONING

Despite the changing socio-political and economic context which increased the platform for Hindu merchants to assert their sense of agency and commercial worth, they were still conscious of the deference required of them as subjects and the formal requirements which they had to adhere to when writing their petitions. As such, their tone of assertiveness had to be balanced with the appropriate measure of deference, which was most clearly communicated in the embodiment of their status as subjects and their acknowledgment of the juridical authority of the colonial state. This process of “performative subjecthood” thus necessarily stressed the benevolent and gracious authority of the state prior to stating their demands. As such, they conform to the argument that when the public representation of claims or grievances in a public transcript such as a petition by subordinate groups are made, they are done so with the expectation that the central features of the system of domination will remain intact, and will thus have a strategic and dialogic dimension that necessarily address the institutional interests of the dominant power.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁷ James C. Scott: *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven, CT 1990, pp. 92-93.

This act of “performative subjecthood” was a complex and subtle maneuvering process by which the self-referencing of themselves as invaluable subjects, and their emphasis on their important political, financial, and commercial contributions was made clear. Concomitantly the potential that this would appear boastful was circumvented and counterbalanced by a tone of due deference and humility.¹⁸ This counterbalancing was further secured by framing such statements in a way that made it seem as if their material contributions were a natural and given part of their selfless service to the state. In general, the power of a petition lay not only in its ability to persuade through its form and content, but in its ability to call the attention of the state in the first place even if it did not subsequently accept or take the contents of the petition seriously. In addition to the state being compelled to pay attention by virtue of wanting to preserve the value of these merchants, they were responsive to the act of petitioning as a legal right that upheld the principles of justice and rule of law, moral imperatives that formed part of the principles that underlie the legitimacy of their political rule and which were indicative of a benevolent and just ruler. Indeed, this was an overarching preoccupation that characterized the extent of Portuguese political and legal spectrum, not just in the metropole, but also in the more complex contexts of its overseas empire. As Stuart Schwartz has concluded, the system of royal and ecclesiastical courts was a highly rationalized mechanism of judicial administration and a system predicated on the concept that the king’s obligation to provide for the legal means to right various wrongs lay at the core of his authority.¹⁹ The distribution of justice and largesse were core components of political rule and denying subjects the right to approach them, to implore them to exercise justice, or to grant a favor, would thus be considered unjust.

The space for legal action for Hindu subjects in the *Estado* was established in the middle decades of the sixteenth century when the Portuguese established various posts and procedures for hearing cases brought by indigenous litigants, notably the appointment of two more magistrates to the High Court in 1548 and the enforcement of the decision that the *Ouvidor Geral* (Crown Judge) would

¹⁸ It is worth noting that of the high volume of petitions received by the English East India Company over the course of the late seventeenth century after their takeover of Bombay in 1663, petitioners who stressed loyalty, service, and humility to Company sovereignty were far more successful in their pleas, see Stern: *Power, Petitions and the ‘Povo’*, p. 203.

¹⁹ Stuart Schwartz: *Sovereignty and Society in Colonial Brazil: The High Court of Bahia and its Judges, 1609–1751*. Berkeley, CA 1973, p. 14.

hear cases brought by *all* indigenous litigants not just elites.²⁰ By the eighteenth century, as the records demonstrate, the existence of plentiful legal documents such as contracts, petitions, appeals and requests for state arbitration by a wide range of Hindu supplicants, including widows, landowners, tax farmers, political intermediaries but most notably merchants, demonstrated the relative accessibility and use of the legal sphere by Hindu subjects and their high level of engagement with the colonial legal apparatus. Their most active engagement with the legal sphere was through petitions, which make up a sizeable portion of the legal documentation found in the archives. As a result, these petitions offer us a rare and rich source in which their strategies of self-fashioning and modes of self-representation, as well as their claims for legal redress, rewards, offices and honors are especially salient.

The effectiveness of the act of petitioning was bolstered by the responsiveness of the state. Indeed, all of the petitions found in the archives submitted by Hindu subjects are accompanied by evidence that they were given a measure of consideration. This is evidenced by annotations on the copies of petitions submitted by Hindu merchants, records of the official ruling in response to the contents of the petition that usually accompanied the copies, a justification of the ruling and sometimes lengthy elaborations as to the justificatory grounds or invalid nature of the claims, demands or appeals made by the supplicant(s). The fact that the colonial authorities despite enforcing other discriminatory legislation did not deny their Hindu subjects the right to petition and were greatly responsive to it, bolstered the act of petitioning in the *Estado* and allowed it to become the most effective mechanism for the channeling of demands, appeals or grievances.

Petitions were so ubiquitous during this period that even Hindu subjects who were supposedly completely unfamiliar with the legal process and purportedly so far removed from the ambit of the institutions of the colonial state employed it as a means of redress. In 1766, for example, Narba Sinay, Ambo Bally Sinay, and Lingua Dalvi, “Brahmans from the Province of Ponda” who “do not understand the language, nor the Portuguese customs, who do not know how to move in the Courts of Goa,” were nevertheless still able to submit a petition that sought to reverse the order that suspended a payment known as *muxara*, which was a kind of salary paid to them by the colonial authorities. Until this moment,

²⁰ It should be noted that they would not be allowed to appeal their cases, see Benton: *Law and Colonial Cultures*, p. 120.

Narba Sinay and Lingoa Dalvi had been receiving 30 *xerafins* per month and Ballu Sinay 25 *xerafins* per month.²¹ They claimed that this amount “only just sustained the supplicants and their families” and after their household expenses “nothing at all is left of the said *muxara* for the supplicants for anything else.”²² In addition, they further argued that as “officials of the *Fazenda* in Goa the *muxara* which they receive for their maintenance is such that they should not pay taxes.”²³ Unfortunately, the outcome of their petition is unknown as no records as to the response of the authorities either in Lisbon or Goa are yet to be found. Nevertheless, their very act of petitioning in spite of their self-confessed ignorance and isolation from the centers of power is evidence of the ubiquity of petitions as means of redress. Furthermore, the language of the petition, which simultaneously stressed their dire and pitiful condition and the fact that they were legitimately due the *muxara* salary by virtue of their status as state officials, is reflective of the carefully crafted argumentation employed by Hindu subjects in their petition.

Thus, while Hindu merchants held a clear burden of expectation towards the state in what they perceived to be its obligations in providing them with an audience and the actual mechanisms for legal redress, they also understood what was required from them when using these very same mechanisms. Firstly, on a practical level, they were cognizant of and complied with the formal requirements as to the format, language and the correct procedural steps in producing and submitting their petitions. In general, for a petition to be effective it had to mention the ruler or ruling body it was addressed to, an outline of the request or proposition, which was sometimes accompanied by the underlying reasons for it or a motivation and the name and often other qualities of the petitioner(s).²⁴ This standard or format was adhered to in the variety of contexts in which petitions have been employed but in imperial contexts, colonial subjects would also have

²¹ Historical Archives of Goa, Goa, India (hereafter HAG), Livros do Monções do Reino (hereafter MR) 187-142A, f. 250, Dalgado: *Glossário Luso-Asiatico*, p. 84.

²² HAG MR 187-142A, f. 250.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ Lex Heerma Van Voss: Introduction. In: Van Voss (ed), *Petitions in Social History*, p. 6.

to address a colonial power with demands based on the metropolitan system of justice and frame their arguments according to European legal conventions.²⁵

In order to comply with these requirements, the services of a third party in the form of legally trained individuals such as *procuradores* (attorneys) would usually have been sought. The petition of the merchant Upea Camotin, for example, written in 1756, states that his *carta testamunhável* or witness testimony “has been remitted and submitted by his attorney” during the procedures. During the legal dispute between the merchants Ramu Sinay and Sau and Santu Sinay, both parties made declarations and responded to one another through their respective *procuradores*.²⁶ In the *Estado* during the eighteenth century, Pombaline reforms aimed at further integrating converted Christians into the religious and administrative folds meant that a larger number of Christian Brahmans were trained as lawyers and many functionaries of the *Estado* such as teachers, clerks, secretaries or archivists were Hindu.²⁷ The integration of converted Brahmans into the professional legal fold as lawyers and attorneys who despite conversion, often maintained a Brahmanical identity and participated in the socio-cultural rituals and markers of Brahmanhood, may have aided the access of these merchants to legal counsel by increasing levels of trust as they were drawn from within the same community, or have helped to overcome such barriers as language.

THE USE OF DEFERENTIAL HUMILITY IN THE ACT OF “PERFORMATIVE SUBJECTHOOD”

Alongside following the standard format, petitioners also complied with the requirements of the formality in the language and deferential style in order to show that they did not – at least ostensibly – intend to question the established power structure and respected their place in it.²⁸ Petitions cast in contexts of subordination such as colonial settings remained within the official discourse of

²⁵ Ibidem; Saliha Belmessous: *Native Claims: Indigenous Law Against Empire, 1500–1920*. Oxford 2012, p. 8.

²⁶ AHU, Índia, Cx. 91, Doc. 71; AHU, Índia, Cx. 129, Doc. 36.

²⁷ Luís Pedroso de Lima Cabral de Oliveira: *Do Reformismo Jurídico Pombalino em Goa*. In: *Boletim da Faculdade de Direito da Universidade de Coimbra*, no. 79 (2003), p. 631.

²⁸ Van Voss: *Introduction*, pp. 1-2.

deference, invoked the hierarchical verities of the system of power and were structured by performances of deference, respect, reverence, admiration, and even adoration to further convince ruling elite of their claims.²⁹ Indeed, the term used to indicate a Hindu merchant or merchants as the petitioning party was *supplicante* or supplicant, which immediately denote their humility in regards to their supplicating and entreating themselves to the state. This degree of subservience, however, was a necessary part of the process and expected from petitioners whatever their socio-economic status, but this ritualistic, humble language used did not negate the impact that the petition or the petitioner could have on governmental actions.³⁰ The requirement of deference would have been more pronounced within colonial contexts in which the power dynamics between subject and ruler were especially asymmetrical and where one could not possibly appeal to the state to intervene on ones behalf without first acknowledging its authority. In both the Portuguese and English colonial contexts in South Asia, the rule of law was one of communicating a promise of rights, but it was also one of subjection.³¹

As Potukuchi Swarnalatha's case study of colonial Andhra Pradesh illustrates, handloom weavers in British colonial Andhra Pradesh did not have mastery over written English but realized that posing as humble supplicants was a necessary aspect of petitioning and thus made repeated references to their humble stature in relation to the Company and the state.³² Similarly, in seventeenth and eighteenth-century New Hampshire, both men and women used a language of subservience in their petitions and stressed their humble qualities, with women in particular referring to themselves as "powerless" and "helpless" and men stressing their economic weakness in their messages of need.³³ Whilst Hindu merchants would also strategically curry the favor of the state by accentuating its greatness and magnanimity – qualities that were emphasized when contrasted with their own (supposed) relative weakness – there were indeed concerted

²⁹ Scott: *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, pp. 93-95.

³⁰ Marcia Schmidt Blaine: *The Power of Petitions: Women and the New Hampshire Provincial Government, 1695–1770*. In: Van Voss (ed.): *Petitions in Social History*, p. 62.

³¹ Radhika Singha: *A Despotism of Law: Crime and Justice in Early Colonial India*. Oxford 2000, p. 33,

³² Swarnalatha: *Revolt, Testimony, Protection*, p. 107.

³³ Blaine: *The Power of Petitions*, p. 62.

efforts to ensure that their self-characterization was not limited to, or overwhelmingly a picture of, weakness or desperation. Thus, even when Hindu merchants used language to deliberately stress their desperate state, their condition and the ensuing requests for redress or clemency would be strenuously contextualized within a broader assertion of their commercial worth and contributions, and when possible, reference to their lineage and proven record of virtuous service.

The language of deferential humility and an emphasis on loyal and sustained service are especially apparent in petitions that sought to secure appointments to an administrative post, or when a son petitioned for the post of his father to be passed on to him in the event of his death. The petition of Vittogi Sinay Dumo, merchant and resident of Goa submitted in 1759, for example, appealed for a *requerimento* for the position of *Corretor da Provincia de Bardes* (Broker for the Province of Bardes) and stressed the relevant services that he had made for that office during the reign of Viceroy Pedro Mascarenhas, Conde de Sandomil, which had not been officially recognized in a formal nomination or the creation of an official post.³⁴ It appears that this did occur as subsequent petitions submitted for the same reasons by his son, Poquea Sinay Dumo in 1773 required a copy of the original *requerimento*. While his grandson, Chondra Sinay Dumo, sought the *mercê* for the nomination of the post of *Corretor dos Balagateiros* as well as the *rendimentos* (revenues) of two villages in the Province of Ponda.³⁵

Chondra Sinay Dumo's petition submitted in 1786 is a perfect example of the format and language that structured the kind of performative subjecthood invoked in the crafting of a petition aimed specifically at securing a royal favor. Firstly, in seeking this nomination, Chondra Sinay Dumo, strikes an extremely deferential tone, beginning his petition with the act of "prostrating himself

³⁴ In this context, a *requerimento*, which can be roughly translated as requisition, was an official order that granted the claims or demands made by an applicant, or as in this case, formally granted an application for an administrative or political post. AHU, Cx. 100, Doc. 27.

³⁵ AHU, Índia, Cx. 93, Doc. 43. Hindu merchants used the term *mercê*, which roughly translates as favour or benefit, but could also refer specifically to land held as a grant for services rendered to the state, when stating their requests to the state, see Anthony Xavier Soares (trans.) of Sebastião Rodolpho Dalgado: Portuguese Vocables in Asiatic Languages. Baroda 1936, p. 224.

against the Royal Throne of Your Majesty.”³⁶ Secondly, in keeping with another step in the performance of virtuous subjecthood, he then establishes a lineage of virtuous and selfless service whilst making reference to his own record of contributions.³⁷ In crafting his lineage of service, he states that he sought “to continue and follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather who distinguished himself greatly in the Royal Service of Your Majesty.”³⁸ “Imitating their fervor,” he states, he “has always made a personal study to deserve those same credits that were won by his predecessor, which are evidenced by the attached documents and attestations of the honorable viceroys and more magistrates of this State.”³⁹

Finally, he subtly hints at the duality of the relationship between virtuous subjects and magnanimous rulers by stating that their ability to achieve such merits rested on the reciprocal loyalty of the king, he stressed that these examples of service gave “proof of the loyalty and meritoriousness of Your Majesty” and were “proof of loyal and meritorious subjects.”⁴⁰ He emphasizes the fact both his grandfather and father were not rewarded for their illustrious service and monetary contributions to the state, despite the fact that they “had voluntarily served with distinctive zeal, fidelity, honor, disinterest and subservience to your Majesty.”⁴¹ Furthermore, he stresses how his grandfather in particular distinguished himself as “amongst the most illustrious of his Nation and with his own costs and relevant usefulness to the same State of Your Majesty in India, as much in the time of peace as in the time of war.”⁴² Chondra Sinay Dumo’s intention in underscoring these facts would have been to imply that the state’s subsequent transferal of these rewards to him was justified and perhaps even long overdue.

After this elaborate framing, Sinay Dumo’s petition culminates in a set of demands and the underlying motivations as to his request to be formally granted

³⁶ AHU, Índia, Cx. 93, Doc. 43.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

the *mercê* to be nominated to the post of *Corretor dos Balagateiros* as well as the *rendimentos* of two villages in the Province of Ponda. He states that he “implores the royal clemency of His Majesty so that it will be destined that he will handle with decorum, the *rendimentos* of the Village Priol, or Siroda of the Province of Ponda” as currently his minimal possessions and the “limitation of his fortune do not allow him to appreciate the enjoyment of the *Palanquin*, *aptaguir* and *Chonvor* for not having the *rendimentos* or wealth of its Privilege.”⁴³ Accumulating the revenues of these villages would legitimize his public use of the *palanquin* and *aptaguir*, which, as the petition notes are “distinctive of Asiatic nobility” and that would thus allow him to make a public display of wealth and social rank.⁴⁴ He subsequently put “in the venerable presence of Your Majesty to be attentive and to remunerate the *mercê do rendimento* of any village in the Province of Ponda to the amount of three thousand *rupias* per year or that of whichever grace Your Majesty feels fit to make, as the supplicant has a large family whom he cannot sustain as the suppliant does not have the necessary revenue to live in the same decorum and treatment that he has lived in until today.”⁴⁵

The fact that one of the primary purposes of Chondra Sinay Dumo’s petition was to secure the rights to generate the additional revenue required for him to legitimately augment his social status through ornate and visual ritualistic markers such as the *palanquin* and the *aptaguir*, is a key example of how Hindu merchants employed the legal mechanisms of the state for their own personal advantage. Indeed, the very ability of Hindu merchants to firstly accumulate such revenue, which they did primarily by engaging in the colonial trade of the *Estado* and subsequently, to use this revenue to fashion themselves in ways that conformed to the category of an “Asiatic noble,” was one of the most direct and visible benefits that could be wrought from engaging with the commercial and institutional arms of the colonial state.

Importantly, Chondra Sinay Dumo was not alone in using the petition for such instrumental purposes as securing the right to conspicuous displays of wealth and prestige. A diplomatic agent for the Portuguese and prominent mer-

⁴³ Ibidem.

⁴⁴ The *aptaguir* was a large, ornamental shade or canopy used during processions that were used by high-ranked individuals, see Dalgado: Glossário Luso-Asiatico, p. 48.

⁴⁵ AHU, Índia, Cx. 93, Doc. 43.

chant, Upea Camotin was also motivated to petition the state in 1765 in order for the viceroy, the Conde de Ega, to grant him a *mercê* that would allow him to “ride on horseback and with an umbrella palanquin with a guard of sepoy and the liberty to pass through any area without being vexed or taxed by their landowners.”⁴⁶ To secure this right he invoked “his many years of service” and the numerous duties he had performed for the state, primarily as a diplomatic agent on behalf of the Portuguese with the Marathas. Emphasizing the “royal service, that he has performed with all the zeal, fidelity and good satisfaction,” he “desires the appropriate distinction for his person that has been delayed.” Tactfully, he also includes an appeal to precedent, referring to the decision of a previous governor who conceded the same set of privileges to the official translator of the state who was also a Hindu merchant and who extended this privilege to the translator’s sons and brothers.

The petitions of both Chondra Sinay Dumo and Upea Camotin were thus motivated by similar aims and followed the same format in that they framed their substantial demands with the deferential and obsequious tone of a respectful subject whilst greatly stressing their record of service as virtuous subjects, which crucially, were yet to be remunerated. The fact that Chondra Sinay Dumo’s petition was well supported by a lengthy and detailed expose of his long record and lineage of service to the state, and accompanied by credible documentation such as written attestations of high-ranking political figures such as the Governor Francisco da Cunha Menezes (1786–1794), clearly reflects his determination, knowledge of the legal process and the strategies required for petition to be successful.

CLAIMING THE RIGHTS OF A SUBJECT: PETITIONING FOR ARBITRATION AND INTERVENTION

Hindu merchants also made references to long and loyal records of service to the Portuguese Crown in petitions that appealed for the king to intervene on their behalf, especially in cases in which they had suffered commercial losses due to the actions of a third party or as the result of decisions taken by state officials. In this vein, the instrumental uses of the petition, i.e. to request justice,

⁴⁶ HAG MR 176-137A, f. 38.

arbitration and intervention of the authorities to adjudicate in cases of commercial dispute, becomes more salient. As such, their subjecthood is performed so as to present themselves as preeminent subjects worthy of the king's attention but there is simultaneously a strong invocation of the paternalistic responsibilities of the king or the viceroy towards them as colonial subjects.

A collective petition submitted in February 1770 by the merchants Bulla Naique, Govinda Naique and Dugu Camotin who referred to themselves as "principal men of business in the capital of Goa" begins with an elaborate preamble that described the service of their ancestors. In this they describe how they:

"[...] continue under the establishment of a great credit, of a very extended commerce, active and passive to the various ports of Europe, and the various stopovers of Asia, Africa, and America, contributing in this way to the public circulation of goods and important assets and distinguishing themselves in their loyalty and love for the Portuguese Crown, in the urgent necessities of the Estate with donations, they find themselves now, more than ever, in grave deterioration due to the detention of their product which remains in Lisbon of their cargo made in Bahia in 1762 and 1764 and all years since the year 1765."⁴⁷

Firstly, the vague referencing to "ancestors" imparts a sense of timelessness and immutability to the service and engagement of these merchants and their predecessors with the *Estado*, especially when this was compelled by their supposed "fidelity and love for the Portuguese Crown." Despite the fact that such professions of fidelity and love should be taken with a degree of skepticism, even if entirely truthful, they demonstrate the extent to which such proclamations were core components of the performance of virtuous subjecthood. Similar to the petitions of their fellow merchants analyzed above, it is only after their elaborate declaration that they are able to request the state to intervene in the return of their goods, which they claimed had been mistakenly apprehended and seized in Portugal. The purchase in Bahia and the consignment and sale of their goods in Lisbon had been entrusted to their *procuradores* or brokers who now disputed their request to return them to India "on their own account and risk" despite the fact that in 1786, they had "remitted legal and veridical proof

⁴⁷ HAG MR 196-145B, f. 458.

that those same seized goods were uniquely those of the supplicants.”⁴⁸ The seizure of their goods was based on suspicions as to whether or not they did belong to what the petition describes as “Indian people.”⁴⁹

To prove their ownership, they presented “authentic copies” of letters between themselves and their brokers, that confirm the “embarkation of those goods that by order of Your Majesty had stayed deposited with them” which they claimed remained unreturned and uncompensated for, and for which no *requerimento* had been issued for the resolution of this dispute.⁵⁰ The fact that these merchants were first, disputing the decision of the authorities in Lisbon to seize the goods in the first place and requesting that the king intervene and issue an order to resolve the dispute between them and their brokers in their favor, was a potentially sensitive situation. As such, it was one that required counterbalancing their demanding and assertive tone with such an elaborate and ingratiating statement to cast them in the best light possible.

In a strikingly similar case, the merchant Vitogy Camotin lodged a petition to appeal to the viceroy to intervene on his behalf and help reverse the decision of the authorities in Lisbon which was threatening his commerce and his reputation.⁵¹ He stated that as a “[r]everential supplicant he expounds in the benign understanding of Your Excellency, the unfortunate decadence in which it the traffic of his merchandise is found” blaming it primarily on “the lack of punctual and due correspondence that he has verified from his merchant correspondents in the court of Lisbon.”⁵² According to his testimony, Camotin stressed that the matter was especially pressing due to the fact that the goods which he and other merchants had remitted to Lisbon had been unjustly seized there by order of the king in 1766. The reasons for the seizure are unclear but Camotin was strenuous in deflecting any role in instigating the causes for the seizure underscoring that

⁴⁸ HAG MR 196-145B, f. 458.

⁴⁹ Ibidem.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ Philomena Sequeira Antony has briefly touched upon this petition as an example of how local merchants appealed to authorities in Lisbon for the redressal of grievances, see Philomena Sequeira Antony: Hindu Dominance in the Goa Long-Distance Trade. In: Stephen S. Jeyaseela (ed.): The Indian Trade at the Asian Frontier. New Delhi 2008, pp. 225-256.

⁵² AHU, Índia. Cx. 86, Doc s/n°.

he was “entirely innocent in any guilt for the motives of this procedure.”⁵³ In order for Camotin to recover his portion of the seized goods he requested that the king provide a “*requerimento* to inform the truth about the innocence of the supplicant” to enable the “freeing of the said goods” and once again stressed the obligation that his correspondents in Lisbon as his representatives at the court had in upholding his “figure,” or rather his reputation.⁵⁴

Camotin was as motivated to clear his name and protect his reputation as a trustworthy merchant, as he was about recovering his goods. He repeatedly stressed his “real innocence” and attempted to mitigate his role by arguing that the “detainment of his goods and the handling of his merchandise does not fit in his radius” referring to the fact that as he was fixed in Goa, he was unable to clarify the matter in Lisbon in person.⁵⁵ Thus, he appealed to “the notorious zeal and exact care” and “benevolence” of the viceroy to issue a *mercê* and attend to this matter especially as the “circulation of his merchandise produced a principal portion of the subsistence of the court.”⁵⁶ Indeed, that Hindu merchants repeatedly petitioned for the state to intervene on their behalf when their commercial interests were being threatened as the result of the actions of a third-party was one of the most advantageous uses of the petition. Importantly, it was also a means of holding the diverse judicial and administrative institutions and actors that made up the structure of the Portuguese overseas empire, as well as the metropolis itself to account. These merchants petitioned in Goa and sought the intervention of the viceroy against decisions that had been taken by the authorities in Lisbon, which had been detrimental to their commercial activities. This ability was especially crucial to Hindu merchants who were fixed in Goa but whose goods and capital circulated within very global networks.

In a similar vein, Bagatry Camotin, Biquea Camotin and Narana Camotin, inheritors of the estate of the merchants Rondlu and Chrisna Camotin, petitioned the viceroy on March 20, 1773, to intervene on their behalf and issue reparations for their loss of capital which had occurred as a result of the decision to expel the Jesuits and seize their land, which rendered them incapable of retrieving the

⁵³ Ibidem.

⁵⁴ Ibidem.

⁵⁵ Ibidem.

⁵⁶ Ibidem.

money and the accrued interests that the Jesuits still owed them.⁵⁷ Just as in the preceding petition of Vitogy Camotin, their appeal to the viceroy to intervene also rested on a discreetly made claim that a decision on the part of the authorities in the *Estado* had in fact contributed to their current situation. Once again a careful balance had to be struck between assertively providing the authorities with plausible reasons to intervene whilst using a tone of deference and humility to mitigate the potential impact of appearing querulous and criticizing the decision in the first place. The Camotins stressed that theirs was a particularly pressing case due to the fact that their “house” was one of the biggest commercial houses in Goa and this decision was having a “notable loss in their circulation of commerce” due to their goods being stalled. Moreover, because they had been hit with requests to repay the debts and capital advances which had been claimed and reclaimed after the death of their father, this had caused “a poverty of such that cannot be asked of such great families.”⁵⁸

As we can see, Hindu merchants had clear expectations of the paternal duties of the state but before claiming this expectation, they presented and fashioned themselves as “loyal” subjects with “love” for the Crown as men of sound reputation and as families of good standing. Indeed, one of the most interesting manifestations of this expectation was the assumption that the state could and would intervene in cases where their commerce had been threatened by the actions of another sovereign power. This expectation was most clearly articulated in the petition submitted in 1777 by the merchant Vencatexa Camotim of the prominent Mhamai merchant family, who, in a petition devoid of the language of supplication and which issued a set of demands to the viceroy after losing a cargo of rice that was en-route to Goa from Angediva in the south that had been “robbed by the Bonsulo.”⁵⁹ His petition states that the viceroy “had been served” with the request to issue an order to the general of the province of Bardez to meet with the *sarcar* of the Bonsulo and demand the return of the cargo or the remuneration of its total, as its loss or a depreciation in the price of

⁵⁷ HAG MR 196-145B, fls. 458.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹ Xavier Centre for Historical Research, Goa (hereafter XCHR), *Burrador dos burroens no anno 1777*, f. 14,004. The *Bonsulo* in question was most likely a member of the Sawants of Bhonsale who were tributary members of the Maratha clan system and regular enemies of the Portuguese.

rice would cause “evident danger” to the merchant firm of Vencatexa Camotin.⁶⁰

Camotin’s request that the viceroy directly intervene to remedy a solution that would make it possible for them to recoup their investment in the cargo of rice according to the manner dictated was an explicit act of assertive and forceful litigation. It must be underscored, however, that this level of assertion was a rarity in the petitions submitted by Hindu merchants, especially when they were employed to appeal for clemency or legal redress in order to resolve and alleviate a dire personal situation. In such petitions, Hindu merchants were careful to fashion themselves as subjects in extreme desperation or poverty, appealing to the sympathy and benevolence for the king to ask for clemency in cases of bankruptcy, indebtedness, or as the collective petition of the Camotins above claimed, “extreme poverty.”

The petition of Sada Siva Sinay, for example, submitted in March 1784, combined this strategy, and that of presenting a record of good subjecthood, in appealing to the state to forgive his debts. Indeed, the beginning of Sinay’s petition is almost excessive in its deference beginning with his address that asked “Your Majesty be served to put his eyes of piety on the Supplicant and forgive him of all his debt.”⁶¹ He proceeds his pleading by “prostrating and kissing with the utmost respect and humility the most pious and most dignified feet of Your Most Faithful Majesty who God protects, representing as he is the most loyal vassal of Your Majesty and his grandparents for more than one hundred years, who lives underneath the protection and refuge of Your Majesty who now finds himself in the ultimate misery.”⁶² Despite having diligently “made punctual payment every year” of the *rendas dos dizimos* of the village of Goa *Velha*, or Old Goa, due to an epidemic, which had left him “totally destitute of health, possessions and fortune” he was “in short, miserable lacking the power nor the means for his own sustenance and less to satisfy the extent of the of his debt of the *Renda*.”⁶³ To bolster his plea for mercy, he also referred to a letter of February 7, 1776, of the Marques of Pombal who in his capacity as

⁶⁰ XCHR, *Burrador dos burroens no anno 1777*, f. 14,004.

⁶¹ AHU, Índia, Cx. 129, Doc. 36.

⁶² *Ibidem*.

⁶³ *Ibidem*.

Inspector General of the Royal Treasury passed a law on June 20, 1774, that “extinguished the debts of debtors from who it cannot be expected that they would be collected.” Referring to this letter and this law, Siva Sinay claimed in his witness testimony that the “debtors to the Royal Treasury would not be imprisoned.”⁶⁴ His petition thus blended all the characteristics of a subject worthy of mercy: a subject with a good record and lineage of service, left in pitiful state by forces out of his control for which he could plausibly invoke the intervention of the king whilst appealing to a formal legal precedence, which officially warranted the benevolent yet legally sanctioned act of excusing his debts or at least, sparing him the fate of jail. A note on the margin of the petition stipulates “it seemed should be heard by the *Junta da Fazenda*” (royal treasury board) and if it “could order the non-imprisonment of the supplicant given the Royal Letter and Law that is accompanied.”⁶⁵ Due to the lack of an accompanying ruling in the set of documents, it is not clear what the outcome of his petition was.

While as subjects of the Portuguese Crown, Hindu merchants held a firm belief that they could appeal to the state to exercise its responsibility of patronage and protection in cases where there were extenuating circumstances or factors out of their control, they also invoked the legal authority of the colonial state to intervene in internal matters that affected the dynamics of its Hindu mercantile community. A letter dated in 1779 to the Secretary of State Melo e Castro from the Governor General at the time, Dom José Pedro da Câmara, for example, described in a brief postscript a dispute within “one of the big houses of commerce of this city” who he describes as the “*gentios* called Corondos” and notes that these *gentios* who “live in society” have “disagreed and disunited” as a result of death of Administrator of the house, which resulted “in doubt amongst the remaining four *gentios* as to who remained as partners, who had the same rights to the ‘house’ and its capital” and who would be made its administrator.⁶⁶ In seeking a resolution to this dispute, as the remaining partners were unable to come to an agreement or satisfactory arrangement amongst themselves, the matter was thus referred to the *Ouvidor Geral* (Attorney General) who had jurisdiction over civil cases. It appears that the *Ouvidor Geral*

⁶⁴ AHU, Índia, Cx. 129, Doc. 36.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁶ HAG MR 214-158A, f. 240.

was unable to successfully resolve the matter and “the dispute of the partners of the Gentios Corondos” was remitted to Lisbon where on March 29, 1786, it elicited a response and further instructions from the Secretary of State Martinho Melo e Castro to Governor Francisco da Cunha e Meneses.⁶⁷ According to the letter, one of the partners, Biquea Naique Corondo was unhappy and “repeatedly protested” the prevailing administrative arrangements of the house.⁶⁸ To voice his grievances, he had submitted a petition in 1782 and presented his case in front of the *Junta da Fazenda* protesting that his assets were being forced into the “reach” of the new Administrator. Perhaps what had compelled the petition to Lisbon was that he claimed that he “had suffered great prejudice due to the administration that the said House had been placed in” and so had “the contracts with the *Fazenda Real* that had been entered into that Administration.”⁶⁹ Wary of any threat to these contracts, Melo e Castro informed the viceroy that the king, “finding what the supplicant has alleged to be true” had ordered “a prompt administration of justice” so that Biquea Naique Corondo be allowed to “collect his assets with preference over the debt of the *Fazenda Real*.”⁷⁰ Biquea Naique Corondo’s persistent litigation calling for the intervention of the state to adjudicate an internal dispute within his own family firm, a dispute that had been prejudicial to his personal commercial interests, is thus a clear example of the state’s role as a third-party arbitrator and the wide acceptance of the juridical authority of the colonial state.

PETITIONING AS LOBBYING

Petitions were not just a mechanism with which to appeal for the redressal of grievances or commercial disputes, but they were an important medium of communication through which merchants had the scope to lobby for their interests and potentially influence matters of an important political or commercial nature. As such, they were a mechanism of “participatory politics” that reaffirmed the

⁶⁷ AHU, Índia, Cx. 222, Doc. 117.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*.

authority of the Portuguese colonial state.⁷¹ In this vein, the strategy and presentation of their “performative subjecthood” once again hinges off their assertion of their worth as commercial subjects, a claim that foregrounds and accentuates the value of their ensuing claims or propositions. In petitions where Hindu merchants offer critical commentary on existing legislation, which they argued were detrimental to the commercial interests of the *Estado*, the kind of virtuous subjecthood as seen in the petitions above, where merchants would stress their individual merits or their good lineage of service, would be transformed into an expression of collective meritorious subjecthood aimed at the common good. In presenting themselves as dutiful subjects concerned with upholding the common interests of the *Estado*, these merchants, primarily in their own self-interest, could enter into a dialogue with the colonial state, advocate on commercial issues and critique existing institutional and legislative arrangements by masking this discourse as an act of good subjecthood for the collective good of the *Estado*.

For example, on August 24, 1779, a group of Hindu merchants who described themselves as the “principal men of business of Goa” submitted a collective *parecer* or commentary, regarding their impressions of the current *Regimento da Alfândega de Goa* (Customs Regiment of Goa), as well as what they perceived to be causes for the general decline of the *Estado* and the ill health of its economy.⁷² The *parecer* was lengthy and highly detailed, beginning with a preamble describing the decline of the *Estado* and an overview of the current customs regiment, “the difficulties, restrictions and inconveniences that one finds in the regiment of this same *Alfândega*,” a review of each chapter of the current regiment and a proposal of changes, and some concluding remarks. These merchants claimed that their *parecer* was aimed at providing what was “most useful and advantageous to commerce,” that improve agriculture, help in the introduction

⁷¹ Stern: Power, Petitions, and the ‘Povo’, p. 202.

⁷² HAG MR 223-161B, ff. 569-578. The signees of the petition were: Govinda Naique, Dilluba Naique Fardesar? Vittogi Camotim, Anta Sinay, Vittogi Naique, Rama Cutam Sinay, Vencatim Naique, Vittogi Sinay, Custtam Damotim, Viveji C, Vencatim Naique, Rama Chandra Naique, Manoel Menezes, Gopalla Naique, Crisna Sinary Cabaddy, Vitogy Sinay Dempo, Daquia Cammoby, Vencatexa Camotim, Ramachandra Camoty, Gopala Hame Poy, Quensoa Porobu, Narba Camotim, Vittoba Sinay, Narana Naique, Rogunata Camotim, Goinda Sinay, Mesigiry Naique, Vencu Sinary, Custam Poy, Moiria Naique, Rogunata Camotim, Verungu Sinay.

of factories and thus the growth of the royal revenues, which they “understood to be the most necessary to revive this State and the commerce in which has reached its ultimate ruin.”⁷³ To stress that this was not solely for their own self-interest but a contribution to the “common good” of the *Estado*, they use the possessive “our” when referring to the institutions that would be improved as a result of their propositions. As such, they argue that “increasing commerce follows an increase in the navigation, settlements and opulence of the power of the *Estado* so that *our* Armadas and *cafilas* may take the coconut, areca to Gujarat where they are ultimately taken by the English present there.”⁷⁴

This was a means of underscoring their sense of belonging or allegiance to the *Estado* as subjects, that they had a stake in improving the commercial health of the *Estado* and a way of reinforcing their intentions that their *parecer* was merely in the collective good and mutual benefit of the state. They claimed, for example, that what had caused the decadence of the commerce of Goa was that the *Estado* could not compete effectively as it had before as the “State not having almost no production or industry, nor agriculture, when it is introduced in Asia by other European Nations, Goa can no longer make the commerce of transport her goods to the other Ports as it once did.”⁷⁵ This, coupled with the fact that the current regiment and regulations of the Customs House of Goa “diminish the liberty of commerce, they retard its operations which require brevity,” meant they should be “cast off” as such practices are not even “found in any Ports of the Orient.”⁷⁶ They thus suggest, that the system of the Customs should “be attentive to seeking in its ports that the balance of its commerce with other foreigners be advantageous, in that more goods leave from them than enter” as “this balance results in the interest of more money in the land, interest that is connected to the general and individual profits of the public.”⁷⁷ Whilst Hindu merchants by virtue of their agency, acumen and their proximity to the colonial state had the standing to offer such substantial arguments, it was more effective when framed by a “performative subjecthood” that presented a service

⁷³ HAG MR 223-161B, ff. 569, 577.

⁷⁴ A *cafila* in this context refers to a convoy of loaded ships. HAG MR 223-161B, f. 577. Italics are my own. HAG MR 223-161B, f. 588.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 577.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, ff. 569-578.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, f. 575.

of subjecthood for the collective good, rather than a direct assertion of merchants lobbying for their own commercial interests.

The authorities in Goa were attentive and responsive to their *parecer* as evidenced by the response of the *Ouvidor* (Crown Judge) of the *Alfândega* written four months later on December 8, 1779.⁷⁸ In his response, the *Ouvidor* affirmed twice that their concerns had been heeded, emphasizing firstly that “the Men of Business, most instructed of the most prohibition and credit over the regime of the *Alfândega* to regulate its rights have been heard” and that “the Men of Business who still remain in this weakened capital who direct in the presence of Your Majesty their answer on paper in which their opposition to the establishment of the *Erario Regio* I only see the spirit of freedom and frankness and the desire to conserve this miserable *Estado* which maintains itself in large part from the revenue of that same *Alfândega*.”⁷⁹ It would appear therefore that the *Ouvidor* was secure in the sincerity of their motivations and the character of the merchants and was thus confident in the credibility and value of their proposals.

Importantly, the *parecer* and the answer of the *Ouvidor* were remitted to Lisbon and elicited an response from the Secretary of the State, Martinho Melo e Castro on March 11, 1780, who replied to the recommendations of the Hindu merchants and offered additional thoughts of his own. For example, in response to their suggestion that greater freedom be granted to the circulation of foreign goods and traders, Melo e Castro concluded that “freedom should be given to all merchants who wish to go aboard Ships.”⁸⁰ That the authorities in Goa granted the *parecer* enough importance that it was remitted to Lisbon for further consideration, and where it elicited a significant response is evidence that Hindu merchants were effective in using the petition to lobby for their commercial interests. In this vein, they engaged in what Filippo de Vivo has termed “political communication,” a form of political action in which they circulated and conveyed information and ideas concerning political institutions and events, specifically when such institutions and events directly impacted their

⁷⁸ The *Ouvidor* was the Crown Magistrate of the Customs. HAG MR 223-161B, ff. 569-578.

⁷⁹ The *Erario Regio* was the Royal Treasury. Ibidem.

⁸⁰ Ibidem.

commercial or socio-cultural and religious interests.⁸¹ Concomitantly, the fact that the propositions of these Hindu merchants were formally acknowledged and integrated in the official legislation of the *Estado* reflects the porousness in the formal divide between the state and these subjects and the value attributed to their cognitive contributions.

CONCLUSION

The examples of petitioning as analyzed above demonstrate the multi-faceted and dynamic engagement of Hindu merchants with the judicial and institutional apparatuses of the Portuguese colonial state in India. Furthermore, as this chapter has demonstrated, Hindu merchants were highly successful in asserting their agency, wielding their commercial acumen and exerting their influence when advocating and lobbying for the protection and advancement of their commercial interests. These merchants fully understood the benefits that could be derived from utilizing the legal mechanisms and channels of the colonial state, but they were also highly cognizant of the conventions and discourse required in the act of petitioning. This is most saliently demonstrated in the framing of their petitions within the carefully calculated act of “performative subjecthood,” which, as we have seen, was deployed in multifarious ways and in a multitude of contexts. Whilst this process was necessarily supplicatory, it was also a platform to simultaneously present themselves as virtuous but indispensable subjects who merited the attention, intervention and/or clemency of the state. “Performative subjecthood” whilst deferential in its tone and format, was also an opportunity to confront the colonial state with its dependency on its Hindu mercantile community and assert their fiscal, material and commercial contributions to the *Estado*. As such, the act of petitioning by Hindu merchants in the eighteenth century *Estado* was a dual act of superimposing their considerable commercial and political agency onto the invocation of their status as colonial subjects.

Importantly, the act of petitioning also afforded them a direct channel through which they could influence decisions at the highest levels of the colonial and metropolitan political structures and hold them to account. As such, they are a

⁸¹ Filippo de Vivo: *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics*. Oxford 2007, p. 2.

keen example of how colonial subjects adopted and adapted to one of the most crucial apparatuses in the formation and exercise of colonial authority and how, in the *Estado*, the administration of law was also influenced by a “dialogic encounter” between the colonial state and its Hindu mercantile community.⁸² As Filippo de Vivo has concluded, “communication and power mutually influence each other” and the carefully crafted petitions in which the concerns, insights, claims, and demands of Hindu merchants are so clearly asserted and communicated, demonstrates their ability to efficiently influence the power structures of the *Estado* during this period.⁸³ The complexity in the dependency displayed in the relationship between these merchants and the state, as demonstrated in the dialogue between the authors and content of the petitions, and the state’s responses to them reflect the expectations of *mutual* reciprocity thought to be inherent in the relationship between ruler and subject. Such tensions and complexities are perfectly embodied in the act of “performative subjecthood” enacted in the petitions above. As a result, not only did these petitions act as a voice for these Hindu merchants and other *gentio* subjects, they also offer us a window into the complex political, commercial and socio-cultural terrain of the eighteenth-century *Estado*, and the processes of negotiation, mutual dependencies and reciprocities that helped to ensure the survival of the Portuguese presence in India during this period.

⁸² I borrow the term “dialogic encounter” from Aparna Balachandran and her chapter on petitioning in British colonial Madras, see Balachandran: *Petition Town*, p. 151.

⁸³ Vivo: *Information and Communication in Venice*, p. 2.

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