

Colonial Latin America

TENTH EDITION

Mark A. Burkholder & Lyman L. Johnson



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PREFACE

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Since the first edition of *Colonial Latin America* in 1990, numerous scholars have published valuable works on the colonial and early national periods. From them, we have drawn new material included in the tenth edition. Our debt to our colleagues' recent books can be found in the revised suggestions for further reading at the end of each chapter.

New to This Edition

- Revised discussion of conquest and early settlement in Chapter 2. Revised slave trade estimates in Chapter 4. Improved and expanded discussion of labor and wages in Chapter 5.
- Revised examination of plantation slavery in Chapter 6.
- Improved and expanded discussion of *mayorazgos* and family life in Chapter 7.
- Improved discussion of rural and urban settings and daily life in Chapter 8.
- Updated suggested readings throughout the book.

We again call students' attention to the valuable five-volume reference work *Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture*, edited by Barbara A. Tenenbaum, and to an important volume of bibliographical essays, *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol. XI, *Bibliographical Essays*, edited by Leslie Bethell. The periodicals listed in "A Note on Periodical Literature and Suggested Readings" after the Epilogue continue to enrich the study of colonial Latin America. We strongly recommend that student readers use these wonderful resources when they begin their research.

We remain grateful for the assistance of Kenneth J. Andrien and Allan J. Kuethe in revising and expanding our treatment of the early eighteenth century. For this edition Kendall Brown has helped guide additional revisions to our discussion of late colonial administrative reforms. In recent editions we have relied heavily on colleagues who have specialized knowledge. We are also very grateful

to Camilla Townsend and Susan Kellogg for improving our understanding of Mesoamerica and the era of conquest. Christon I. Archer and Jaime E. Rodríguez O. encouraged us to rethink the process of revolution and independence for the seventh edition. Marcela Echeverri provided a perceptive and constructive critique of several chapters, and we are grateful for her assistance. Karen Graubart and Peter Villella were very helpful in guiding our revision of the discussion of *limpieza de sangre* in Chapter 6. Alex Borucki generously assisted our efforts to modernize our estimates of the slave trade. We also thank colleagues and students who have used the book in classes and offered suggestions for improvement. We alone are responsible for the results.

We are indebted to the institutions and individuals that have supported our efforts by granting permission to use images from their collections. We are especially grateful to the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection of the University of Texas Libraries, the Denver Art Museum, and the Collection of Frederick and Jan Mayer of Denver, Colorado. Finally, we want to thank again Sue Johnson and Carol Burkholder for their unflinching support. With great appreciation and love we again dedicate this revision to them.

St. Louis, Missouri
Charlotte, North Carolina

M.A.B.
L.L.J.



Map 1 Topographical Map of Latin America.

CHAPTER 1

America, Iberia, and Africa Before the Conquest

CHRONOLOGY

c. 100 B.C.–A.D. 750	Emergence and prominence of Teotihuacan in Mesoamerica
250–900	Maya Classic period
718–1492	Christian Reconquest of Iberia from Muslims
c. 900–1540	Maya Postclassic period
c. 1325	Mexica begin to build Tenochtitlan
1415	Portuguese capture Ceuta in North Africa
1426–1521	Triple Alliance and Aztec Empire
c. 1438–1533	Inka Empire
1469	Marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabel of Castile
1492	Columbus's first voyage; fall of Granada; expulsion of Jews from "Spain"; first Castilian grammar published
1493	Papal donation; Columbus's second voyage (1493–96); "Columbian Exchange" begins with Spanish introduction of sugarcane, horses, cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, chickens, wheat, olive trees, and grapevines into Caribbean islands
1494	Treaty of Tordesillas
1500	Pedro Alvarez Cabral lands on Brazilian coast
1502	Nicolás de Ovando takes about 2,500 settlers, including Las Casas, to Española; Moctezuma II elected <i>tlatoani</i> of Mexica
1510–11	Diego de Velázquez conquers Cuba
1512	Laws of Burgos
1513	Blasco Núñez de Balboa crosses the Isthmus of Panama to Pacific

AMERINDIAN CIVILIZATIONS ON THE EVE OF EUROPEAN CONQUEST

The Western Hemisphere's history begins with the arrival of its first inhabitants. Most scholars agree that the hemisphere was settled in a series of migrations across the Bering Strait from Asia. There is less consensus about when these migrations took place. Hunting populations expanded rapidly along the west coast of the hemisphere

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after 14,000 B.C. Some evidence suggests, however, that human populations may have been present in South America as early as 35,000 B.C. If this is verified by additional research, then some humans probably reached the hemisphere using small boats.

Regardless of the date of first arrivals, it took millennia to occupy the hemisphere. Societies in Mexico, Central America, and the Andean region had initiated the development of agriculture and complex political forms before 5000 B.C. On the other hand, the Caribbean Basin and the plains of southern South America were inhabited less



The main temple at Chichen Itza, near the modern city of Merida, Mexico. Chichen Itza was the major Postclassic-era Maya city.

than 2,000 years before Columbus's arrival. The hemisphere's indigenous population at the moment of contact in 1492 was probably between 35 million and 55 million.

Although the Aztecs and Inkas are the civilizations best known during the age of conquest, the inhabitants of these empires constituted only a minority of the total Amerindian population and resided in geographic areas that together represented only a small portion of Latin America's landscape. Aymara, Caribs, Chichimecas, Ge, Guaraní, Mapuche, Maya, Muisca, Otomí, Pueblo, Quibaya, Taíno, Tepeaneca, Tupí, and Zapotec joined a host of other peoples and linguistic groups who inhabited the Americas; together they formed a human mosaic whose diverse characteristics greatly influenced the ways in which colonial Latin America developed.

By 1500 over 350 major tribal groups, 15 distinct cultural centers, and more than 160 linguistic stocks could be found in Latin America. Despite the variety suggested by these numbers, there were, essentially, three forms or levels of Indian culture. One was a largely nomadic group that relied on hunting, fishing, and gathering for subsistence; its members had changed little from the people who first made stone points in the New World in about 10,000 B.C. A second group was sedentary or semisedentary and depended primarily on agriculture for subsistence. Having developed technologies different from those of the nomadic peoples, its members benefited from the domestication of plants that had taken place after about 5000 B.C. The third group featured dense, sedentary populations, surplus



Inka ruin, Machu Picchu, Peru.

agricultural production, greater specialization of labor and social differentiation, and large-scale public construction projects. These complex civilizations were located only in Mesoamerica and western South America. The civilizations of Teotihuacan, Monte Albán, Tiwanaku, Chimú, and several Maya cultures were among its most important early examples.

Mesoamerica is the term employed to define a culturally unified geographic area that includes central and southern Mexico and most of Central America north of the Isthmus of Panama. Marked by great diversity of landscape and climate, Mesoamerica was the cradle of a series of advanced urbanized civilizations based on sedentary agriculture. Never more than a fraction of this large region was ever united politically. Instead, its inhabitants shared a cultural tradition that flourished most spectacularly in the hot country of the Gulf of Mexico coast with the Olmec civilization between 1200 and 400 B.C. While linguistic diversity and regional variations persisted, common cultural elements can be traced from this origin. They include polytheistic religions in which the deities had dual (male/female) natures, rulers who exercised both secular and religious roles, the use of warfare for obtaining sacrificial victims, and a belief that bloodletting was necessary for a society's survival and prosperity. The use of ritual as well as solar calendars, the construction of monumental architecture including pyramids, the employment of a numeric system that used twenty as its base, emphasis on a jaguar deity, and the ubiquity of ball courts in which a game using a solid rubber ball was played were additional characteristics of complex Mesoamerican societies. Long-distance trade involving both subsistence goods and artisanal products using obsidian, jade, shell, and feathers, among other items, facilitated cultural exchange in the absence of political integration. This rich cultural tradition influenced all later Mesoamerican civilizations, including the Maya and the Aztecs.

Following the decline of the Olmecs, the city of Teotihuacan (100 B.C.—A.D. 750) exercised enormous influence in the development and spread of Mesoamerican culture. Located about thirty miles northeast of modern Mexico City, Teotihuacan was the center of a commercial system that extended to the Gulf coast and into Central America. At its height its urban population reached 150,000, making it one of the world's largest cities at that time. One of the most important temples at Teotihuacan was devoted to the cult of the god Quetzalcoatl, or Feathered Serpent. Commonly represented as a snake covered with feathers, Quetzalcoatl was associated with fertility, the wind, and creation. Following Teotihuacan's decline in the eighth century, the Toltecs dominated central Mexico from their capital at Tula.

Although not clearly tied to Teotihuacan's decline in the eighth century, the Toltecs came to dominate central Mexico by the tenth century. The Toltecs used military power to extend their influence and manage complex tribute and trade relationships with dependencies. Tula was both an administrative and a religious center. It was constructed on a grand scale with colonnaded patios, raised platforms, and numerous temples. Many of the buildings were decorated with scenes suggesting warfare and human sacrifice.

In the Andean region, geographic conditions were even more demanding than in Mesoamerica. The development of complex civilizations after 1000 B.C. depended



Representations of Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent at Teotihuacan. Teotihuacan was the largest of the Classic-era cities in Mexico. In the background is the Temple of the Moon.

on the earlier evolution of social and economic strategies in response to changing environmental, demographic, and social conditions. Along the arid coastal plain and in the high valleys of the Andes, collective labor obligations made possible both intensive agriculture and long-distance trade. Irrigation projects, the draining of wetlands, large-scale terracing, and road construction all depended on collective labor obligations, called *mita* by the native population and later *mita* by the Spanish. The exchange of goods produced in the region's ecological niches (lowland maize, highland llama wool, and coca from the upper Amazon region, for example) enriched these societies and made possible the rise of cities and the growth of powerful states.

The chronology of state development and urbanization within the Andean region was generally similar to that in Mesoamerica. However, there was greater variation in cultural practices because of the unique environmental challenges posed by the arid coastal plain and high altitudes of the mountainous regions. Chavin was one of the most important early Andean civilizations. It dominated a populous region that included substantial portions of both the highlands and coastal plain of Peru between 900 and 250 B.C. Located at 10,300 feet in the eastern range of the Andes north of present-day Lima, its capital, Chavín de Huantar, was a commercial center that built upon a long tradition of urban development and monumental architecture initiated earlier on the Peruvian coast. The expansion of Chavin's power was probably related to the introduction of llamas from the highlands to the coastal lowlands. Llamas dramatically reduced the need for human carriers in trade since one driver could control as many as thirty animals, each carrying up to seventy pounds. Chavin exhibited all the distinguishing

characteristics found in later Andean civilizations. Its architecture featured large complexes of multilevel platforms topped by small residences for the elite and buildings used for ritual purposes. As in the urban centers of Mesoamerica, society was stratified from the ruler down. Fine textile production, gold jewelry, and polytheistic religion also characterized the Chavín civilization until its collapse. By the time that increased warfare disrupted long-distance trade and brought about the demise of Chavín, its material culture, statecraft, architecture, and urban planning had spread throughout the Andean region. The Moche, who dominated the north coastal region of Peru from A.D. 200 to 700, were heirs to many of Chavín's contributions.

In the highlands two powerful civilizations, Tiwanaku and Wari, developed after A.D. 500. Tiwanaku's expansion near Lake Titicaca in modern Bolivia rested on both enormous drainage projects that created raised fields and permitted intensive cultivation and the control of large herds of llamas. At the height of its power, Tiwanaku was the center of a large trade network that stretched to Chile in the south. Pack-trains of llamas connected the capital to dependent towns that organized the exchange of goods produced throughout the Andean region. Large buildings constructed of cut stone dominated the urban center of Tiwanaku. A hereditary elite able to control a substantial labor force ruled this highly stratified society. Wari, located near present-day Ayacucho, may have begun as a dependency of Tiwanaku, but it soon established an independent identity and expanded through warfare into the northern highlands as well as the coastal area once controlled by the Moche. The construction of roads as part of Wari's strategy for military control and communication was a legacy bequeathed to the Inkas who, like the Aztecs in central Mexico, held political dominance in the populous areas of the Andean region when Europeans first arrived.

The Maya

Building in part upon the rich legacy of the Olmec culture, the Maya developed an impressive civilization in present-day Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, southern Mexico, and Yucatan. Although sharing many cultural similarities, the Maya were separated by linguistic differences and organized into numerous city-states. Because no Maya center was ever powerful enough to impose a unified political structure, the long period from around A.D. 200 to the arrival of the Spaniards was characterized by the struggle of rival kingdoms for regional domination.

Given the difficulties imposed by fragile soils, dense forest, and a tropical climate characterized by periods of drought and heavy rains, Maya cultural and architectural achievements were remarkable. The development of effective agricultural technologies increased productivity and led to population growth and urbanization. During the Classic era (A.D. 250–900), the largest Maya cities had populations in excess of 50,000.

From earliest times, Maya agriculturalists used slash-and-burn or "swidden" cultivation in which small trees and brush were cut down and then burned. Although this form of cultivation produced high yields in initial years, it quickly used up the soil's nutrients. Falling yields forced farmers to move to new fields

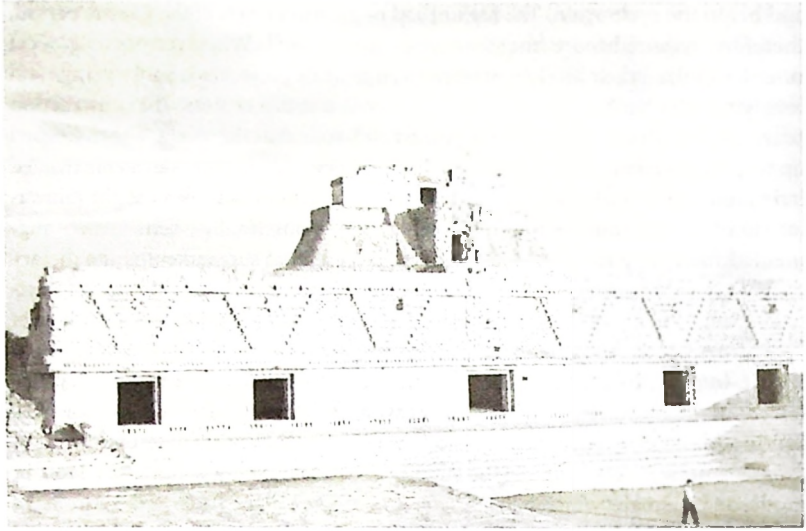
and begin the cycle again. The high urban population levels of the Classic period, therefore, required more intensive agriculture as well. Wherever possible, local rulers organized their lineages or clans in large-scale projects to drain swamps and low-lying river banks to create elevated fields near urban centers. The construction of trenches to drain surplus water yielded rich soils that the workers then heaped up to create wetland fields. In areas with long dry seasons, the Maya constructed irrigation canals and reservoirs. Terraces built on mountainsides caught rainwater runoff and permitted additional cultivation. Household gardens further augmented food supplies with condiments and fruits that supplemented the dietary staples of maize (corn), beans, and squash. The Maya also managed nearby forests to promote the growth of useful trees and shrubs as well as the conservation of deer and other animals that provided dietary protein.

In the late Preclassic period, the increased agricultural production that followed these innovations helped make possible the development of large cities like El Mirador. During the Classic period, Maya city-states proliferated in an era of dramatic urbanization. One of the largest of the Classic-period cities was Tikal, in modern Guatemala, which had a population of more than 50,000 and controlled a network of dependent cities and towns. Smaller city-states had fewer than 20,000 inhabitants. Each independent city served as the religious and political center for the subordinated agricultural population dispersed among the *milpas* (maize fields) of the countryside.

Classic-era cities had dense central precincts visually dominated by monumental architecture. Large cities boasted numerous high pyramids topped by enclosed sanctuaries, ceremonial platforms, and elaborately decorated elite palaces built on elevated platforms or on constructed mounds. Pyramids also served as burial locations for rulers and other members of the elite. The largest and most impressive buildings were located around open plazas that provided the ceremonial center for public life. Even small towns had at least one such plaza dominated by one or more pyramids and elite residences.

Impressive public rituals held in Maya cities attracted both full-time urban residents and the rural population from the surrounding countryside. While the smaller dependent communities provided an elaborate ritual life, the capital of every Maya city-state sustained a dense schedule of impressive ceremonies led by its royal family and powerful nobles. These ritual performances were carefully staged on elevated platforms and pyramids that drew the viewers' attention heavenward. The combination of richly decorated architecture, complex ritual, and splendid costumes served to awe the masses and legitimize the authority of ruler and nobility. Because there were no clear boundaries between political and religious functions, divination, sacrifice, astronomy, and hieroglyphic writing were the domain of rulers, their consorts, and other members of the hereditary elite.

Scenes of ritual life depicted on ceramics and wall paintings clearly indicate the Maya's love of decoration. Sculpture and stucco decorations painted in fine designs and bright colors covered nearly all public buildings. Religious allegories, the genealogies of rulers, and important historical events were familiar motifs.



The Nunnery complex at the Classic-era Maya site of Uxmal.

Artisans also erected beautifully carved altars and stone monoliths (stelae) near major temples. Throughout their pre-Columbian existence, the Maya constructed this rich architectural and artistic legacy with the limited technology present in Mesoamerica. The Maya did not develop metallurgy until late in the Classic era and used it only to produce jewelry and decorations for the elite. In the Postclassic period, the Maya initiated the use of copper axes in agriculture. Artisans and their numerous male and female assistants cut and fitted the stones used for palaces, pyramids, and housing aided only by levers and stone tools. Each new wave of urban construction represented the mobilization and organization of thousands of laborers by the elite. Thus, the urban building boom of the Classic period reflected the growing ability of rulers to appropriate the labor of their subjects more than the application of new or improved technologies.

The ancient Maya traced their ancestry through both male and female lines, but family lineage was patrilineal. Maya families were large, and multiple generations commonly lived in a single residence or compound. In each generation a single male, usually the eldest, held authority within the family. Related families were, in turn, organized in hierarchical lineages or clans with one family and its male head granted preeminence.

By the Classic period, Maya society was rigidly hierarchical. Hereditary lords and a middling group of skilled artisans and scribes were separated by a deep social chasm from the farmers of the countryside. To justify their elevated position, the elite claimed to be the patrilineal descendants of the original warlords who had initiated the development of urban life. Most commonly, kings were selected by primogeniture from the ruling family; on at least two occasions during the Classic

period, however, women ruled Maya city-states. Other elite families provided men who led military units in battle, administered dependent towns, collected taxes, and supervised market activities. Although literacy was very limited, writing was important to religious and political life. As a result, scribes held an elevated position in Maya society, and some may have come from noble families.

In the Classic period and earlier, rulers and other members of the elite, assisted by shamans (diviners and curers who communicated with the spirit world), served both priestly and political functions. They decorated their bodies with paint and tattoos and wore elaborate costumes of textiles, animal skins, and feathers to project secular power and divine sanction. Kings communicated directly with the supernatural residents of the other worlds and with deified royal ancestors through bloodletting rituals and hallucinogenic trances. Scenes of rulers and their consorts drawing blood from tongues, lips, ears, and even genitals survive on frescos and painted pottery. For the Maya, blood sacrifice was essential to the very survival of the world. The blood of the most exalted members of the society was, therefore, the greatest gift to the gods.

In the Postclassic period, the boundary between political and religious authority remained blurred, although there is some evidence that a priestly class distinguishable from the political elite had come into existence. Priests, like other members of the elite, inherited their exalted status and were not celibate. They provided divinations and prophecies, often induced by hallucinogens, and kept the genealogies of the lineages. They and the rulers directed the human sacrifices required by the gods. Finally, priests provided the society's intellectual class and were, therefore, responsible for conserving the skills of reading and writing, for pursuing astronomical knowledge, and for maintaining the Maya calendars.

Although some merchants and artisans may have been related to the ruling lineages, these two occupations occupied an intermediate status between the lords and commoners. From the Preclassic period, the Maya maintained complex trade relationships over long distances. Both basic subsistence goods and luxury items were available in markets scheduled to meet on set days in the Maya calendar. Each kingdom, indeed each village and household, used these markets to acquire products not produced locally. As a result, a great deal of specialization was present by the Classic period. Maya exchanged jade, cacao (chocolate beans used both to produce a beverage consumed by the elite and as money), cotton textiles, ceramics, salt, feathers, and foods, especially game and honey taken from the forest. Merchants could acquire significant wealth and the wealthiest lived in large multiple-family compounds. Some scholars believe that by the Postclassic period rulers forced merchants to pay tribute and prohibited them from dressing in the garments of the nobility.

A specialized class of urban craftsmen produced the beautiful jewelry, ceramics, murals, and architecture of the Maya. Their skills were essential for the creation and maintenance of both public buildings and ritual life, and, as a result, they enjoyed a higher status than rural commoners. Although the evidence is ambiguous, certain families who trained children to follow their parents' careers probably

monopolized the craft skills. Some crafts may also have had a regional basis, with weavers concentrated in cotton-growing areas and the craftsmen who fashioned tools and weapons from obsidian (volcanic glass) located near the source of their raw materials. Most clearly, the largest and wealthiest cities had the largest concentration of accomplished craftsmen.

The vast majority of the Maya were born into lower-status families and devoted their lives to agriculture. These commoners inherited their land rights through their lineage. Members of lineages were obligated to help family members in shared agricultural tasks as well as to provide labor and tribute to the elite. Female commoners played a central role in the household economy, maintaining essential garden plots, weaving, and managing family life. By the end of the Classic period a large group of commoners labored on the private estates of the nobility. Below this group were the slaves. Slaves were commoners taken captive in war or criminals; once enslaved, the status could become hereditary unless the slave were ransomed by his family.

Warfare was central to Maya life and infused with religious meaning and elaborate ritual. Battle scenes and the depiction of the torture and sacrifice of captives were frequent decorative themes. Since military movements were easier and little agricultural labor was required, the hot and dry spring season was the season of armed conflict. Maya military forces usually fought to secure captives rather than territory, although during the Classic period Tikal and other powerful kingdoms initiated wars of conquest against their neighbors.

Days of fasting, a sacred ritual to enlist the support of the gods, and rites of purification led by the king and high-ranking nobles preceded battle. A king and his nobles donned elaborate war regalia and carefully painted their faces in preparation. Armies also included large numbers of commoners, but these levies had little formal training and employed inferior weapons. Typically, the victorious side ritually sacrificed elite captives. Surviving murals and ceramic paintings show kings and other nobles stripped of their rich garments and compelled to kneel at the feet of their rivals or forced to endure torture. Most wars, however, were inconclusive, and seldom was a ruling lineage overturned or territory lost as the result of battlefield defeat.

Building on the Olmec legacy, the Maya made important contributions to the development of the Mesoamerican calendar. They also developed both mathematics and writing. The complexity of their calendric system reflected the Maya concern with time and the cosmos. Each day was identified by three separate dating systems. As was true throughout Mesoamerica, two calendars tracked the ritual cycle (260 days divided into 13 months of 20 days) and a solar calendar (365 days divided into 18 months of 20 days, with 5 unfavorable days at the end of the year). The Maya believed the concurrence of these two calendars every fifty-two years to be especially ominous. Uniquely among Mesoamerican peoples, the Maya also maintained a continuous "long count" calendar that began at creation, an event they dated at 3114 B.C. These accurate calendric systems and the astronomical observations upon which they were based depended on Maya contributions to

mathematics and writing. Their system of mathematics included the concepts of the zero and place value but had limited notational signs.

The Maya were almost unique among pre-Columbian cultures in the Americas in producing a written literature that has survived to the modern era. Employing a form of hieroglyphic inscription that signified whole words or concepts as well as phonetic cues or syllables, Maya scribes most commonly wrote about public life, religious belief, and the genealogies and biographies of rulers and their ancestors. Only four of these books of bark paper or deerskin still exist. However, other elements of the Maya literary and historical legacy remain inscribed on ceramics, jade, shell, bone, stone columns, and monumental buildings of the urban centers.

The destruction or abandonment of many major urban centers between A.D. 800 and 900 brought the Maya Classic period to a close. There were probably several interrelated causes for this catastrophe, but no scholarly consensus exists. The destruction in about A.D. 750 of Teotihuacan, the important central Mexican commercial center tied to the Maya region, disrupted long-distance trade and thus might have undermined the legitimacy of Maya rulers. More likely, growing population pressure, especially among the elite, led to environmental degradation and falling agricultural productivity. This environmental crisis, in turn, might have led to social unrest and increased levels of warfare as desperate elites sought to increase the tributes of agriculturalists or to acquire additional agricultural land through conquest. Some scholars have suggested that climatic change contributed to the collapse, but evidence supporting this theory is slight. Regardless of the disputed causes, there is agreement that by A.D. 900 the Maya had begun to enter a new era, the Postclassic.

Archaeology has revealed evidence of cultural ties between the Toltecs of central Mexico and the Maya of the Yucatan during the early Postclassic period, but the character of this relationship is in dispute. Chichen Itza, the most impressive Postclassic Maya center, shared both architectural elements and a symbolic vocabulary with the Toltec capital of Tula. Among these shared characteristics was a *tzompantli*, a low platform decorated with carvings of human heads. Bas-relief carvings of jaguars, vultures holding human hearts, and images of the rain god Tlaloc were also found at both cities. Other key architectural elements of Chichen Itza appear to have central Mexican antecedents as well. The Temple of Warriors, a stepped platform surmounted by columns, was embellished with a *chacmool*, a characteristic Toltec sculpture of a figure holding a bowl on his stomach to receive sacrifices. Finally, while Maya cities had ball courts from early days, Chichen Itza's largest court was constructed and decorated in the style of the Toltecs.

Sixteenth-century histories written by Spanish priests suggest that the Toltecs conquered the Maya of the Yucatan. Based on native informants, these histories claim that the Toltec invasion was led by the prince Topiltzin, who had been forced to leave Tula by a rival warrior faction associated with the god Tezcatlipoca. Defeated by the powerful magic of his adversary, Topiltzin, called Kukulcan by the Maya, and his followers migrated to the east and established a new capital at Chichen Itza after defeating the Maya.

Recent archaeology has confirmed cultural parallels between the Maya and the Toltecs, but the direction of cultural exchange remains unclear. It is even possible that changes in Maya iconography and architecture reflected the impact of cultural intermediaries. The Putun Maya from the Tabasco region on the Gulf of Mexico coast had deep and sustained relationships with the Maya of Yucatan and the Toltecs. Culturally and linguistically distinct, the Putun Maya lived on the northwestern periphery of Classic-era Maya civilization. They had strong trade and political connections with central Mexico and spread elements of Toltec cultural practice. As their influence expanded, they established themselves at Chichen Itza. It is also possible that a small number of Toltec mercenaries reinforced this expansion and contributed to the transmission of central Mexican cultural characteristics.

Chichen Itza was governed by a council or, perhaps, a multiple kingship form of government. The city's rulers exercised economic and political influence over a wide area, imposing tribute requirements on weaker neighbors by military expansion. Although the reasons are not yet clear, it is known that Chichen Itza experienced significant population loss after A.D. 1100 and was conquered militarily around A.D. 1221. Following this catastrophe, the city retained a small population and may have remained a religious pilgrimage site.

By the end of the thirteenth century, a successor people, the Itza, had come to exercise political and economic authority across much of Yucatan. The origin of the Itza is unclear. As their name suggests, they claimed to be the people of Chichen Itza. Their elite claimed descent from the Toltecs and were linguistically distinct from the region's original population. It seems more likely that they were related in some way to the Putun Maya.

The Itza eventually probably established the important city of Mayapan, but many Maya groups remained independent. At its peak, Mayapan had a population of approximately 15,000. The size of the city's population and the quality of its construction were far inferior to that of either the major Classic centers, like Tikal, or Postclassic Chichen Itza. Unlike the major Classic period cities that had served as centers for agricultural and craft production and as markets, Mayapan served as the capital of a regional confederation that compelled defeated peoples to pay tribute. This oppressive economic system probably provoked the warfare and rebellion that led to the end of Itza domination and the destruction of Mayapan about A.D. 1450. The Itza persisted, despite these reversals, continuing an independent existence in the Peten region of Guatemala until defeated by a Spanish military force in 1697.

From the fall of Mayapan until the arrival of the Spanish in the sixteenth century, the Maya returned to the pattern of dispersed political authority. During this final period, towns of modest size, some with no more than 500 inhabitants, exercised control over a more dispersed and more rural population than had been the case in earlier eras. The cycles of expansion and collapse experienced by Chichen Itza imitated in many ways the rise and fall of important Maya centers during the Classic period. Although no powerful central authority existed in Maya regions when the Spanish arrived, Maya peoples retained their vitality and sustained essential elements of the cultural legacy inherited from their ancestors.

The Aztec

When the Spaniards reached central Mexico in 1519, the state created by the Mexica and their Nahuatl-speaking allies—now commonly referred to jointly as the Aztec—was at the height of its power. Only the swiftness of their defeat exceeded the rapidity with which the Aztec had risen to prominence. For the century before the arrival of Cortés, they were unquestionably the most powerful political force in Mesoamerica.

Among the numerous nomadic and warlike peoples who pushed south toward central Mexico in the wake of the Toltec state's collapse were the Mexica, one of many aggressive invading bands from the north that contemporary Nahuatl speakers referred to as Chichimec. Ultimately the most powerful, the Mexica adopted elements of the political and social forms they found among the advanced urbanized agriculturalists. After 1246 this emerging Chichimec elite forged a dynastic link with the surviving Toltec aristocracy of Culhuacan. This infusion of the northern invaders invigorated the culture of central Mexico and eventually led to a new period of political dynamism. The civilization that resulted from this cultural exchange, however, was more militaristic and violent than that of its predecessors.

The Mexica became important participants in the conflicts of the Valley of Mexico while the city of Atzacapotzalco was the dominant political power. Valued for their military prowess and despised for their cultural backwardness, Mexica warriors served as mercenaries. They initially received permission to settle in Chapultepec, now a beautiful park in Mexico City, but jealous and fearful neighbors drove them out. With the acquiescence of their Tepanec overlords in Atzacapotzalco, the Mexica then moved to a small island in the middle of Lake Texcoco where they could more easily defend themselves from attack. Here in 1325 or soon afterward they began to build their capital of Tenochtitlan. Despite their improved reputation, they continued for nearly a century as part-time warriors and tributaries of Atzacapotzalco.

By 1376 the Aztec were politically, socially, and economically organized like their neighbors as *altepetl*, complex regional ethnic states, each with a hereditary ruler, market, and temple dedicated to a patron deity. *Altepetl* were, in turn, typically made up of four or more *calpulli*, which also had their own subrulers, deities, and temples. These subdivisions originally may have been kinship based, but by the fourteenth century they functioned primarily to distribute land among their members and to collect and distribute tribute. The ethnic group called the Mexica had only two *altepetl*—the dominant Tenochca and the less powerful Tlatelolca.

The Mexica's first king (*tlatoani*), Acamapichtli, claimed descent from the Toltec dynasty of Tula. After a period of consolidation, the new state undertook an ambitious and successful campaign of military expansion. Under Itzcoatl, the ruler from 1426 to 1440, the Mexica allied with two other city-states, Texcoco and Tlacopan, located on the shores of Lake Texcoco. In a surprise attack the Triple Alliance conquered the city of Atzacapotzalco in 1428 and consolidated control over much of the valley. During the rule of Moctezuma I (Motecuhzoma in Nahuatl) from 1440 to 1468, the Mexica gained ascendancy over their two allies, pushed

outward from the valley, and established control over much of central Mexico. Following an interlude of weaker, less effective rulers, serious expansion resumed during the reign of Ahuitzotl from 1486 to 1502, and Aztec armies conquered parts of Oaxaca, Guatemala, and the Gulf coast. By the early sixteenth century, few pockets of unconquered peoples, principally the Tarascans of Michoacán and the Tlaxcalans of Puebla, remained in central Mexico.

When Moctezuma II took the throne in 1502, he inherited a society that in less than a century had risen from obscurity to political hegemony over a vast region. Tenochtitlan had a population of several hundred thousand persons, many of them immigrants, and the whole Valley of Mexico was home to perhaps 1.5 million. Social transformation accompanied this rapid expansion of political control and demographic growth. Before installing their first *tlatoani*, Mexica society had a relatively egalitarian structure based within the *calpulli*. *Calpulli* leaders, in addition to managing land administration and tribute responsibilities, supervised the instruction of the young, organized religious rituals, and provided military forces when called upon. Mexica *calpulli* resident in Tenochtitlan were primarily associated with artisan production rather than agriculture. The ability of a *calpulli* to redistribute land held jointly by its members was more important to rural and semirural areas than to urban centers. There also were noteworthy differences in wealth, prestige, and power within and among *calpulli*. The *calpulli*'s leader, however—most typically elected from the same family—handled the local judicial and administrative affairs with the advice of a council of elders.

After the Triple Alliance conquered Atzacotzalco—the critical event in the evolution of the Mexica and the Aztec Empire—Itzcoatl removed the right of selecting future rulers from the *calpulli* and *altepetl* councils and gave it to his closest advisers, the newly established “Council of Four” from which his successors would be selected. The power and independence of the ruler continued to expand as triumphant armies added land and tribute to the royal coffers. In the late fifteenth century, the ruler also served as high priest: Moctezuma II took the final step by associating his person with Huitzilopochtli, the Mexica's most important deity.

Among the Aztec in general was a hereditary class of nobles called the *pipiltin*, who received a share of the lands and tribute from the conquered areas, the amount apparently related to their administrative position and rank. They staffed the highest military positions, the civil bureaucracy, and the priesthood. Their sons went to schools to prepare them for careers of service to the state. Noblemen had one principal wife and numerous concubines. This polygyny resulted in a disproportionate growth in the number of nobles and helped promote military expansion and political alliances through intermarriage.

Except for those in Tenochtitlan itself, the *macehualtin*—commoners who owned land or who lived in urban *calpulli*—benefited comparatively little from conquest. Instead, as the backbone of the agricultural labor force, they remained subject to work demands by the state and the nobility as well as to military service. Moreover, the advent of a powerful hereditary nobility reduced the commoners' ability to influence political decisions. Although a few *macehualtin* advanced in

society by means of success on the battlefield, service in the priesthood, or marriage, the potential for upward social mobility was much diminished after the initial period of imperial expansion.

At the base of Aztec society were the vanquished commoners and slaves. *Mayeques* were commoners whose *calpulli* had lost their lands in war and thus had to work for their conquerors. They formed perhaps as many as one third of the population in some places by the early sixteenth century, whereas slaves were only a small handful except in wealthy urban centers like Tenochtitlan, where the Mexica often received them as tribute. In addition, judges punished certain criminal acts by enslaving the offender; prisoners of war could also be enslaved. And adults in periods of great hardship voluntarily gave up their freedom to ensure themselves food, housing, and clothes. But even though slaves were regarded as property, their children did not inherit this status.

Tenochtitlan became a city of specialists that included numerous craftsmen—goldsmiths, jewelers, and feather workers—who ranked above other *macehualtin*. Adjoining the city was Tlatelolco, home to a specialized group of merchants, the *pochteca*. Rich and powerful, they tried unsuccessfully to wrest control from the ruler Axayacatl in 1473, thereby losing many of their privileges until Moctezuma II restored all except their exemption from tribute. The *pochteca* handled long-distance trade, even with areas outside Aztec control. Not only did they play an important economic role, but they also provided information to the emperor about unconquered peoples and restive subjects. Despite their aid to and benefits from Aztec expansion, the *pochteca* were excluded from high-ranking administrative and political positions.

Mexica women were excluded from nearly all high public offices and power, although they fulfilled a variety of roles in a society that differentiated clearly between men's and women's activities. At least one public office in each *altepetl*, however, was reserved for a woman who organized and regulated women's activities. Except for a few priestesses, Mexica women typically married men approved if not selected by their parents. Marriage was a social bond that marked reaching full adulthood, but it could also serve a political purpose as the Aztec used the institution to cement political alliances. Once married, Mexica women's household responsibilities included preparation of maize for tortillas, tamales, and gruel and cooking, cleaning, child care, spinning and weaving cloth, and embroidery. They also offered prayers within the household, a reminder that their household duties were important and even sacred. Outside the house they taught; served as priestesses in the temples; sold fine chocolate, herbs, feathers, and other goods; delivered babies; served as curers and physicians; worked as professional weavers and embroiderers; and held supervisory positions in the markets. Prevented from participating in the long-distance commercial expeditions of the *pochteca*, women often controlled warehoused goods and determined the supplies and prices of goods in the markets of Tenochtitlan. While status as a noblewoman or commoner affected the extent of their participation in these activities—noblewomen relying on servants for many tasks but participating actively in child rearing, weaving, and caring

for household shrines—nearly all women contributed to a family's economic well-being. Their significant contributions in enabling their households to meet labor, tribute, and religious obligations help to explain the attraction of polygyny to Mexica men. When their husbands were on military campaigns, moreover, wives bore full responsibility for ensuring the continued well-being of their households. Given their economic activities, it was fitting that they owned any property they brought to a marriage and could inherit property and pass it on to their heirs.

The gap between the hereditary aristocracy and the commoners grew during the fifteenth century. The dominant *pipiltin* subjected the rest of society to an increasingly harsh regime. A purportedly growing problem with drunkenness may have been one result of commoners' inability to adjust to the new social and economic realities. At the same time, many nobles lost power relative to that of the ruler and his court.

The economy of Mesoamerica as a whole rested on agriculture, with most of the people engaged in the cultivation and harvest of maize, beans, squash, chilies, and a variety of garden vegetables. Because the political and population center of the Aztec state, Tenochtitlan, was located on an island and thus controlled very limited agricultural land, tribute and trade necessarily became the basis of their economy. As the empire expanded, the Aztec forced defeated peoples to send tribute to Tenochtitlan. Because there were no domesticated beasts of burden in Mesoamerica, food could not be sent efficiently over long distances. Valuable goods like cotton cloth, animal skins, brightly colored feathers, jade, precious metals, obsidian, and dyes flowed into the city in an expanding volume of tribute as Aztec armies pushed the empire's borders outward. The *pochteca* supplemented the flow of tribute goods through their trade with subordinated as well as independent states. However, they were prohibited from trading in tribute items. Access to these valuable commodities and scarce raw materials gave Tenochtitlan's craftsmen an important advantage over competing craftsmen in other central Mexican polities. The city's island location provided another competitive advantage as well, for it allowed Tenochtitlan's merchants to distribute many of their goods by canoe to the densely settled communities that lined the shores of the huge lake. By the end of the fifteenth century, Tenochtitlan dominated a regional commercial system in which its merchants exchanged manufactured goods for the foods and specialized products of its neighbors.

The biggest market in central Mexico, in Tlatelolco, daily served tens of thousands of buyers and sellers. The stalls were in neat rows, with foodstuffs dominating the market. Jewelry, feathers, and precious stones were in one row, slaves in another, and cooking utensils and building materials in still another. There was no monetary system, but cacao beans used in a chocolate beverage and cotton cloth were often used to equalize the value of bartered goods.

Religious rituals overseen by a large and powerful priesthood ruled public life in Tenochtitlan. Mexica cosmology was sophisticated and complex. Polytheistic and highly ritualized, the deities included Quetzalcoatl, the culture god associated with Teotihuacan; Tezcatlipoca, the war god of the Toltecs; Tlaloc, the

ancient Mesoamerican rain god; and Tonatiuh, the warrior sun. The center of Aztec religious life, however, was the cult of Huitzilopochtli, a demanding tribal god that the Mexica had worshiped before making the long journey south to the Valley of Mexico. As the Mexica grew in might and wealth after 1428, the cult of Huitzilopochtli expanded as well. Soon the most important god of the pantheon, Huitzilopochtli absorbed qualities previously associated with other deities and continually required human sacrifices. Most important, the Mexica used this demanding god to justify their military expansion and the creation of a tribute empire. The imposition of this bloody cult accompanied each new conquest.

The Mexica believed that only the sacrifice of human hearts could provide the magical substance necessary for the sun to rise and the peoples of the world to survive. Although human sacrifice had been common in Mesoamerica for centuries, if not millennia, the Aztec practiced it on an unprecedented scale. Continued warfare and the provision of sacrificial victims to Huitzilopochtli to sustain the sun became sacred duties, and as the Mexica's power grew, bloody public sacrifices to other gods, such as the fertility deity Xipe Totec, were added to their religious practice. The Mexica's special mission justified and required conquest and tribute. This belief sustained continued commitment from noble and commoner warriors alike. Capturing enemies in battle brought tangible rewards, whereas perishing in battle or on an enemy's sacrificial stone secured an afterlife of luxury and pleasure.

War captives, criminals, slaves, and persons supplied by subject peoples as tribute fell victim to the obsidian sacrificial blade atop the great pyramids. After a victory ceremony, warriors often provided a ritual feast for friends and relatives, in which a small portion of the sacrificed captives' flesh was served as a pâté. But by the mid-fifteenth century Aztec military expansion had slowed and, with it, the supply of sacrificial victims. To solve this shortfall, the Aztec fought "Flower Wars" with their neighbors. Flower Wars were limited conflicts infused with ritual meaning that had occurred as early as the fourteenth century. After taking their prisoners to Tenochtitlan, the Mexica brought in aristocrats from Tlaxcala and other rival states to witness the sacrifices, which might include their own people. Seated in flower-covered boxes, the guests learned a political lesson that transcended the ceremony's religious content: Rebellion, deviance, and opposition to the Aztec state were extremely dangerous. Indeed, in 1487 the Mexica dedicated the new temple of Huitzilopochtli in Tenochtitlan by sacrificing more than 20,000 persons.

Although conquered *calpulli* and *altepetl* continued to worship their own deities, they were forced to accommodate the cult of Huitzilopochtli within their religious life. Some scholars suggest that images of important deities were taken to Tenochtitlan, where they were kept in a pantheon of captive deities. In short, the Aztec exploited their conquered peoples, giving—commoners at least—little in return. Not surprisingly, such exploitation fostered considerable hostility toward the Aztec in much of central Mexico.

The Aztec united their conquered territories through taxation and tribute rather than strong cultural or political institutions. Resident tribute collectors were the sinews of the empire and received tribute payments every eighty days. Often,

this tribute was in addition to what the commoners already paid their local rulers. Behind the tax collectors stood the army, the ultimate weapon to enforce the payment of taxes and to suppress dissension within the empire. The ruling families in conquered areas well knew that Aztec favor was indispensable to their survival, and in addition, cooperation brought them economic benefits and support for their continued rule. Although their children often married Aztec nobles—thus undermining traditional autonomy—these alliances strengthened family prestige.

While recognizing the human cost of their empire, one must also appreciate that the Aztec did accomplish much. They built magnificent temples, created a generally effective army, and developed an elaborate ideology that tied together warfare, human sacrifice, and religion. They also produced an elaborate cosmology and ritual practice that explained the workings of nature and satisfied spiritual needs. Intellectual life was closely associated with religion; therefore, the arts of music, dance, and writing had a sacred dimension. The construction and provisioning of Tenochtitlan, the development of extended commercial routes and large-scale markets, the creation of an effective educational and propaganda system, and the spread of Nahuatl as a common tongue throughout the region also were noteworthy achievements.

The Inka

The Inka created the largest indigenous empire in the Americas and developed the most sophisticated political and administrative structure found among native peoples. In the thirteenth century, the Inka were one of many competing military powers in the southern highlands of Peru. Then, in less than a century, they extended their empire, Tawantinsuyu, or “land of the four parts,” from the Valley of Cuzco on to the northern border of what is now Ecuador and to the Maule River in Chile. The ruler Pachacuti (1438–71) was the prime architect of this territorial expansion and the Inka administrative structure. He first conquered the highland regions near Cuzco and, with his son and successor Topa Inka, pushed the empire’s borders into the highlands of northern Peru. Topa Inka (1471–93) later conquered Chimor and extended Inka control over the vast coastal plain and the southern highlands. Huayna Capac (1493–1525) then made the final additions to the empire in successful campaigns against the peoples of present-day Ecuador.

From the beginning, Inka power was rooted in the efficient organization and administration of their resources. Indeed, their conquest and later control of distant regions depended more on their ability to organize and supply large fighting forces than on new military technology or tactical innovations. Relying on nobles for officers, the Inka used conscripted peasants for the bulk of the army, but they also employed mercenaries. After conquering a region, they conscripted its male population and advanced farther into historically hostile adjacent regions, promising the new subjects an opportunity to even old scores and gain the spoils of victory. Unlike the Aztec, Inka armies were not interested in taking prisoners, and thus death in battle was more common. But the Inka’s frequent successes were a powerful lure in enlisting defeated peoples for participation in future conquests.



Portraits of the first Inka royal couple, Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo, painted in the late colonial period.

An excellent road system in the Andes and along the coast, the maintenance of a network of runners for communication over long distances, and a system of state-organized warehouses of clothing, food, and weapons facilitated Inka military readiness and political control. The empire had over 25,000 kilometers of road, much of it predating the Inka. Relay runners could carry messages from Lima to Cuzco in three days and from the capital to Quito in less than a week. In the absence of writing, they carried *kipus* (*quipus*), multicolored knotted strings that served as memory aids.

The omnipresent llamas gave the Inka both draft animals and a mobile meat supply. In addition, every district of the empire reserved some portion of its production—maize, potatoes, wool, cotton, or other goods—for hard times and for the Inka army and bureaucracy.

The Inka were superb organizers rather than great innovators; unlike the Mexica, they sought to centralize their empire around its capital in Cuzco. They divided it territorially into four major regions, eighty provinces, and more than twice that many districts, each with a number of kin groups that controlled land and other resources. At each level were officials who reported to superiors, the entire pyramidal system culminating in the Sapa Inka, or ruler. Such a system of communication also functioned as a chain of command emanating from the ruler. Close relatives of the Sapa Inka administered the four quarters, and other Inka nobles, the eighty provinces. Local and regional chieftains, or *kurakas*, headed the smaller units and formed the local political bases. The Inka generally used the existing political structures and established elite groups at the local level. Even when rebellion or insubordination forced changes in the administration, the Inka preferred to appoint officials drawn from the families of the deposed rulers.

The imperial social structure largely reflected pre-Inka social organization under a growing and more demanding hereditary nobility related to the Inka rulers. The basic social unit above the family was, again, the *ayllu*, a kin group that had a common ancestry and a hereditary chieftain or *kuraka* advised by village elders. *Ayllu* members worked on the same property, helped one another in a system of mutual obligation, and labored for their leaders, who provided reciprocal benefits in accord with long-standing Andean tradition. Individuals unattached to *ayllus* were known as *yanacona* and were employed by the Inka rulers to maintain themselves, favored nobles, deities, and the cult of royal mummies.

Ancestor worship and *huacas*—sacred items or places—were central to Andean life long before the Inka appeared. Each *ayllu* had its own deities and shrines supported by land farmed to provide sacrifices to them. On matters of import, the villagers consulted prominent ancestors—rulers, the founders of *ayllus*, and *kurakas*—whose mummies were carefully preserved in necropolises and brought out during ritual celebrations. The demands of ancestor and *huaca* worship were originally modest—periodic gifts of food, beverage, and textiles—and the preimperial *ayllus* had little difficulty in meeting them. But then Pachacuti introduced royal ancestor worship on a scale that had far-reaching consequences for the empire.

When a Sapa Inka died, his chosen heir, a son born to his principal wife, inherited the office and responsibilities of the ruler but not his father's wealth. The deceased Sapa Inka's other male descendants, the *panaca*, received his physical possessions as a trust to maintain his mummy and cult. This living court treated the dead ruler as though he were alive, a holy object tangibly linked to the Inka pantheon. Because the *panaca* continued to hold the Sapa Inka's personal possessions after his death, the share of the state's wealth devoted to the royal mummy cults increased. Consequently, new Inka rulers sought to secure their individual honor and reputation by expanding the empire's borders through conquest and thereby increasing revenues. This, in turn, created a well-endowed *panaca* that would continue to influence political life. The royal mummy cults and the system that sustained them, therefore, contributed in some way to the territorial expansion of the Inka. However, Inka military expansion had political and economic, as well as religious and cultural, origins.

Religion was central to the Inka's life. In its upper pantheon was a sky god of innumerable distinct aspects that Spanish chroniclers mistakenly considered to be independent deities. The three principal manifestations of this sky god were Viracocha, a creator god of ancient origin; Illapa, the god of thunder and weather; and Inti, the sun god. Because the Inka rulers claimed descent from one manifestation of Inti, he held the central place in the state's ancestor cult, providing the rulers with links to divinity and the Inka people with a sense of identity and, ultimately, confidence in a mission of expansion. The Inka transported the idols of their conquered peoples to Cuzco, where they were kept in the sun temple. In return, they spread Inti's cult as part of their conquest, constructing temples to him throughout the empire. Compared with that of central Mexico, the Inka's

priesthood was modest in size. Human sacrifice, moreover, was rare and designed to win the deities' goodwill rather than to maintain the universe. Instead, animals, food, fine textiles, and beverages were the usual sacrifices.

In most of their conquered lands, the Inka maintained the existing productive practices. The peoples of the Andes had long valued collective labor to farm, mine, weave, build, and maintain essential services; reciprocal rights and obligations and custom largely defined the nature of an individual's labor. Before the Inka arrived, the region's inhabitants had developed complex administrative and territorial structures to organize labor for irrigation and cultivation and to provide for the exchange of specialized goods across ecologically distinct zones. Called by some the "archipelago" pattern, the hamlet kinship groups, *ayllus*, placed settlers in distinct ecological zones to ensure their access to a range of products—maize, potatoes, cotton, llamas, and coca, among others. The expansion of the imperial bureaucracy, the requirements of the army, and the maintenance of the royal ancestor cults, however, meant that the state had to control any surplus production.

The Inka levied a rotational labor tax, the *mit'a*, on *ayllus* to secure workers for agricultural lands held by the state and its religious cults, as well as to engage them in the construction of roads, bridges, fortresses, temples, palaces, terraces, and irrigation projects. Terracing and irrigation brought previously uncultivated and, at times, marginal lands into production, usually to grow maize. Expanding on an earlier Andean practice, the Inkas sent groups of colonists from their homes to produce ecologically specialized products in conquered regions. These *mitmaq* also helped secure subject territories militarily.

The state stored the goods produced by labor taxation and specialized craftsmen in numerous regional warehouses. Administrators distributed these goods to state employees, to *mit'a* laborers as payment for their service, and to other persons as the need arose. Shared labor and economic redistribution existed in the Andes long before the rise of the Inka state; the Inka's innovation was to organize the resources over a much larger area and thus mitigate the effects of drought and other natural disasters. There was no form of money in the central Andean highlands, and private trading was limited to Peru's north and central coasts and Ecuador's highlands.

Inka advances in economic and political organization eroded local autonomy and social equality in the Andes; in fact, the imperial elite and the expanding state bureaucracy became almost completely cut off from the masses of agricultural workers and craftsmen. At the same time, the *kurakas* were increasingly separated from the Indian masses.

Inka cultural achievements were based upon those of earlier Andean civilizations. Their monumental architecture featured superb stone masonry, but the absence of arches and vaulting gave the buildings a squat appearance. Exquisite Inka textiles, ceramics, and silver and gold work also continued older traditions. Astronomical observation was a central concern of the priestly class, as in Mesoamerica. The Inka may have had three separate calendars recorded on *kipus*, but elements of both the Inka calendar and astronomical observations were lost after the conquest.

Likewise, the Mesoamerican glyphs and pictographs were clearly superior to the Inka's *kipus* for nonoral communication. In comparison with Mesoamerica, Inka achievement was most evident in political organization and the expansion of agricultural productivity through terracing and irrigation. In addition, the Inka contributed more to the peoples they defeated than did the Mexica. Increased agricultural production in parts of the highlands; the introduction of llamas, mainly in northern Peru; and the economic benefits of peace throughout the empire were among the Inka's most important contributions. Moreover, they attempted to centralize their empire through political organization, the use of religion and ideology, the adoption of the Quechua language, and the resettlement of peoples.



Map 2 Major Amerindian Cultures.

The complexity of the Inka and Aztec empires and their cultural attainments were unparalleled in the Americas in 1500. Yet these high cultures shared a number of characteristics with the area's other indigenous peoples. All New World societies lacked iron and hard metal tools, with the exception of a small amount of bronze used by the Inka. Aside from llamas and their relatives in the Andes, there were no large domestic animals available for transport, food, or clothing. Humans transported goods without the benefit of wheeled vehicles, and religion and belief in the supernatural were widespread. Despite these commonalities, however, these various New World societies were marked more by their diversity of cultural, economic, and political achievements, a fact that profoundly affected the course of Iberian conquest and settlement.

THE IBERIAN WORLD IN THE LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

The Iberian Peninsula, where the conquistadors and settlers of the New World came from, is but a fraction of the size of the future Spanish and Portuguese empires in the Americas. Long a part of the Roman world, Iberia endured centuries of political dislocation following the Germanic invasions that began in the fifth century. The repeated failure to resolve the problem of monarchical succession and bitter conflicts among Christian sects rendered the Visigothic kingdom incapable of withstanding the Muslim invasion launched from North Africa in 711. Divided by differing regional, political, cultural, and linguistic identities, the Iberians carried to the New World attitudes formed during the Reconquest, nearly eight centuries of intermittent conflict with the Islamic civilizations that had dominated the peninsula. The Iberians' own social, cultural, and geographic diversity enabled the conquistadors to perceive, and to manipulate to their own benefit, a similar diversity in the loose collection of cultures that they encountered in Mesoamerica and the Andes.

With the exception of the Pyrenees Mountains, which form its northern boundary with France, Iberia is surrounded by water. The Mediterranean Sea on the east and south extends to the Straits of Gibraltar, the narrow expanse that separates the peninsula's southern tip from Africa by ten miles. The Atlantic Ocean and the Cantabrian Sea encircle the remainder of the peninsula. Just over 225,000 square miles in area, Iberia is slightly smaller than the states of Arizona and New Mexico combined. Its landscape is dominated by mountains whose mean altitude is higher than that in any western European country except Switzerland. Although flatlands can be found, mainly on the Portuguese coast, range after range breaks Iberia's terrain into a patchwork of distinct regions. Coupled with few navigable rivers, the mountains make transportation and communication difficult and obstruct political and economic integration. Although its northern and northwestern parts receive substantial rainfall, much of Iberia is dry. A Spanish proverb summarizes the weather of the great central tableland as "nine months of winter and three months of hell."

The Reconquest

The Reconquest created a cultural legacy that the conquistadors and settlers carried to the New World. Although Christians and Muslims struggled intermittently to control Iberia from about 718 to 1492, the most active years were between about 850 and 1250. During this time, Christian knights and settlers pushed south from their initial redoubt in the mountains of northern Spain. Although the Reconquest is often labeled a crusade, its religious zeal only complemented the more mundane and important objectives of securing additional grazing and agricultural land. Military action was most frequently a raid for booty, including slaves. But slowly and sporadically the Christians pushed the frontier south.

In 1147 Lisbon was recovered, and in 1179 the pope recognized Alfonso I of the House of Burgundy as the first monarch of the independent kingdom of Portugal. By the mid-thirteenth century the Portuguese had taken the southern coastal region known as the Algarve and expelled the Muslims from their territory. A change of dynasty in 1384 brought the House of Aviz to the throne, and during an almost fifty-year reign, the first monarch, John I, consolidated his position and set the stage for the creation of Portugal's overseas empire.

The Castilian seizure of Seville in 1248 reduced Islamic domination to the kingdom of Granada. Although subsequent Christian princes occasionally engaged the Muslims in battle, the final phase of the Reconquest did not begin until 1482. In that year Isabel and Ferdinand responded to a Muslim attack on a Christian town and launched a war that lasted until the city of Granada surrendered on January 2, 1492.

Royal families, valorous warriors, a militant Church, and military orders founded to spearhead the Christian advance reaped the initial rewards of land, booty, and tribute. Military prowess brought lordship over subject peoples and immediate economic gain; thus, serving a king in arms became the Iberian Christians' preferred route to wealth and honor. As the Reconquest progressed, Christian settlers entered the conquered frontier regions, often locating in former Muslim cities and villages. But with the consolidation of territorial gains, the pressure of a growing population for additional land renewed the cycle of military conflict.

The final triumph over the Muslims in Granada reinforced the booty mentality that the Iberian Christians had developed during the long Reconquest. Victorious Christians enslaved 15,000 Muslim inhabitants of Málaga alone. Nobles who had contributed to victory gained jurisdiction over areas with large Muslim populations. Commoners received land and in some cases ennoblement for their valor, through royal grants that again confirmed the importance of military service for social advancement. Conveniently, the Christians saw their triumph as evidence that their God actively supported their cause, a belief that they carried into battle against the native civilizations of the Americas.

Iberia in the Age of Ferdinand and Isabel

In the mid-fifteenth century, five independent kingdoms occupied Iberia. Portugal, whose boundaries approximated those of the modern country, had a

population of perhaps 1 million persons in the late fifteenth century. Thus, it was only slightly less populous than the Crown of Aragon, which held sway in the northeast and maintained long-standing territorial and commercial interests in the Mediterranean, including ties to Italy, Byzantium, and the east. Granada, the remaining Muslim stronghold located in the southeast, had some 500,000 persons; Navarre, a small kingdom in the western Pyrenees, had fewer than 200,000. At the center of the peninsula lay Castile, whose area was more than triple that of either Portugal or Aragon and whose population of perhaps 4.5 million persons was roughly four times as large. This geographic and demographic dominance increased even more when Castile conquered Granada in 1492 and annexed Navarre in 1512.

The most significant domestic event in Iberian history between the mid-fifteenth century and the fall of Granada was the marriage in 1469 of Isabel of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon. In 1468 Isabel had been reluctantly recognized by her half-brother Henry IV as the heir to Castile; such was the price of peace in his realm. Henry's reluctance can be traced to his wife's daughter Juana. Juana is also known to historians as La Beltraneja, after Beltrán de la Cueva, who was the queen's lover and—according to Isabel's supporters—Juana's father. Although the charge was probably baseless, Henry, a weak monarch, was cursed with the epithet "the Impotent," and Isabel made the most of her opportunity. Aided by a forged papal bull permitting her to marry a close relative, she wed Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Aragon. Isabel was clearly a woman of strong will, who had already rejected marriage to the widowed King Alfonso of Portugal and the French suitor Charles of Valois. Ferdinand of Aragon was the energetic and ambitious son of John II, who saw in Castile the resources necessary to combat French designs on his kingdom's border.

After Henry IV died in December 1474, Isabel declared herself the queen of Castile. In response, Juana claimed the throne in May 1475 with military support from Portugal and an anti-Aragonese faction at the court of Castile. The ensuing civil war ended in Isabel's victory in 1479. When his father died in the same year, Ferdinand became the king of Aragon, and the "union of the crowns" and a "double monarchy" became reality. For the following quarter-century, the "Catholic Kings"—as the couple were later dubbed by Pope Alexander VI—jointly ruled the largest and wealthiest area of Iberia.

The name *Spain* is often used to describe the realms of Isabel and Ferdinand, but the term erroneously implies a nonexistent unity. Both Castile and Aragon maintained separate economies, political institutions, monetary systems, customs barriers, and lifestyles. Even though the two monarchs worked together so closely that a chronicler recorded, for example, "the king and queen, on such and such a day, gave birth to a daughter," they never, as did their counterparts elsewhere in Europe, sought political unification of their kingdoms. Although their grandson Charles I (later Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire) inherited both crowns, the creation of a single Spanish polity awaited the abolition of the traditional rights (*fueros*) of the Crown of Aragon in the early eighteenth century.

Earlier, during the unhappy reign of Henry IV (1454–74), the most powerful noble families of Castile exerted a political influence that rivaled the Crown's. Henry accordingly attempted to strengthen his power in ways that anticipated actions by the Catholic Kings; he employed *corregidores*, royal agents assigned to major towns, to provide justice and secure compliance with the Crown's will. He also reorganized the Holy Brotherhood (*Hermandad*), a league of law officers hired by municipalities, and increased the appointment of university-educated officials. Henry's open-handed grants of land, jurisdictional rights, offices, and incomes in an effort to buy the loyalty of high aristocrats ultimately failed, however, and consequently Isabel inherited serious financial and political problems.

Isabel's victory over La Beltraneja enabled her to consolidate and extend her royal authority within Castile. Substantial military and political support from many powerful families during the civil war emphasized their importance as allies and the threat they posed if discontented. Consequently, the queen moved carefully to maintain their continued support. By confirming most of Henry's grants to them, she ensured the nobility's economic and social preeminence, but at the same time, she worked to curb their political strength.

The queen used a further reorganized *Hermandad* to end the anarchy plaguing Castile and bring peace to the countryside. Its agents captured malefactors and meted out justice. The imposition of royal justice restored order in rural areas, and the destruction of castles held by nobles who had sided with La Beltraneja was further evidence of the queen's intention to rule as well as reign. In 1480 the Catholic Kings resolved to increase the number of *corregidores* and to send them into all the major cities. As Henry IV had, they turned to men with a university education to staff many of the royal offices. Both Ferdinand and Isabel turned their personal attention to administering justice—the essence of kingship—and enlarging the judicial system to make it more accessible and effective. In addition, they reorganized the Council of Castile. The queen appointed to this supreme advisory, judicial, and administrative body university-educated jurists who were lower-ranking aristocrats or commoners rather than more illustrious nobles. Taken together, the monarchs' actions strengthened the Crown of Castile's authority and increased its ability to implement diplomatic, economic, fiscal, and religious policies.

The Portuguese monarchy in the late fifteenth century was heir to a tradition of strong centralized rule occasionally disrupted by high-ranking nobles eager to enhance their wealth and power. The unprecedented revenue resulting from the Crown's monopoly over trade with newly discovered lands, however, enabled John II (1481–95) to reassert the royal authority lost by his predecessor. John expanded the judicial system and increased the number of provincial administrators (*corregidores*). In addition, he executed for treason the Duke of Braganza, the richest and most influential noble in the realm, and enlarged the royal patrimony in the process. Centralization was again ascendant, although, as in Castile, the aristocracy retained social and economic dominance.



At the time of Spain's conquests in the Americas, blacks, like this drummer at the court of Emperor Charles V, were already a highly visible part of Spanish society.

Society

Society in Castile and Portugal shared many characteristics. Each kingdom recognized three estates—clergy, nobility, and commoners—and a number of corporate bodies with special legal privileges. Birth and family normally determined an individual's place in the social hierarchy. Ties created through godparentage and client–patron relationships also were important to both societies. Each kingdom contained Jews, Muslims, Italians and other foreigners, and black slaves, and neither had many professionals or merchants.

At the top of the Castilian and Portuguese social hierarchies were a few great families that bore titles of duke, marquis, or count. In Castile the greatest nobles controlled half of the kingdom's land, and in Portugal a similar group of about fifteen families also held noble titles, extensive lands, and economic power. Other titled nobles, often indistinguishable from the first in resources, formed a second tier of Castile's hierarchy. In Portugal some 2,000 nontitled nobles received land grants and incomes from the monarchy and constituted an upper-middle

nobility. Together these groups were at the apex of their respective social orders. From 1505 onward, high-ranking Castilian nobles could create entailed estates, or *mayorazgos*, which enabled the preservation of property in perpetuity and formed the basis for consolidating still larger estates through marriage.

The remainder of the nobility were knights known as *caballeros* (*cavaleiros*) or gentlemen, *hidalgos* (*fidalgos*). In Castile they used the honorific *don* and proudly displayed coats of arms. Their status exempted them from direct taxation and provided additional privileges denied to commoners. The *hidalgos'* economic resources varied considerably: The wealthiest in Castile were indistinguishable from the poorer titled nobles, whereas the poorer *hidalgos* possessed less than did well-to-do commoners. Commoners coveted nobility for both its social cachet and its privileges. Recognizing their desire for noble rank, Castilian monarchs gave and, from the 1520s, sold to them patents of nobility. Thus, in both Castile and Portugal a trickle of new families continuously entered the most privileged class in society.

Commoners accounted for over 90 percent of the Iberian population. Most engaged in agricultural or pastoral activities. Although many owned land, frequently it was just a garden plot. Most commoners worked a noble's land for remuneration that at best provided subsistence. A few commoners held professional positions, serving in the clergy, practicing law, or engaging in commerce. Not a bourgeoisie or true middle class, their highest ambition was ennoblement. Although few succeeded, some of the wealthiest did make the transition. Below them were artisans, themselves divided into guilds ranked by prestige, with silversmiths the most honored and cobblers the least.

Although few in number, successful foreign merchants and their descendants formed colonies in Iberia's commercial centers. For example, Genoa's commercial families had their largest Spanish colony in Seville. Their compatriots and other Italian merchants also resided in Lisbon and other Portuguese ports, from which they controlled the kingdom's long-distance trade. Although Iberian merchants were active in Burgos, Medina del Campo, Barcelona, Lisbon, Oporto, and other trading centers, the noble values of the Reconquest—valor and virtue, land, warfare, and religion—stigmatized trade as demeaning for aristocrats. It required the overseas expansion of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to modify this attitude.

Slaves constituted a small segment of society, although slavery had long been known in Iberia, as captives taken in the Reconquest fighting frequently were enslaved. But when Portuguese traders began importing slaves from Africa in 1441, they transformed the nature of slavery on the peninsula. By 1492 more than 35,000 black slaves had reached Portugal. Although some remained in servitude there, many were reexported. By the late fifteenth century, both Seville and Valencia in Spain had large slave populations and active slave markets. Most slaves worked as domestic servants or as unskilled laborers, and the association of dark skin with slavery had become firmly established before the settlement of the New World.

Although by the time of the Reconquest Iberia contained Christians, Muslims, and Jews, religious tolerance had disappeared by the early sixteenth century. Isabel and Ferdinand followed up the victory over the Muslim minority in 1492 by giving the Jews four months either to convert to Christianity or emigrate. Perhaps 80,000 of the 200,000 Jews in Castile and Aragon fled rather than give up their faith. But they took with them knowledge and skills that the kingdoms could ill afford to lose, although the remaining *conversos*, or New Christian converts, continued in their occupations as tax collectors, financiers, physicians, and the like. Spain's loss was Portugal's gain, as John II allowed the exiled Jews to enter his kingdom and remain for some months in return for monetary payments. After the prescribed period ended, the wealthiest Jews purchased permits allowing permanent residence. In 1497, however, John's successor Manuel I (1495–1521) ordered the conversion or expulsion of all Jews in Portugal. Some accepted baptism and remained, but others returned to Spain or emigrated to Holland and other countries. Those who remained in the peninsula became *conversos*.

As the final blow in creating religious homogeneity, Isabel and Ferdinand in 1502 ordered the expulsion or conversion of the remaining Muslims in Castile. Approximately 200,000 had already emigrated after the fall of Granada. But because the terms of the 1502 measure made exile tantamount to the confiscation of their property, nearly all the remaining Muslims accepted baptism. In Portugal Manuel I had ordered the small number of free Muslims to leave in 1497, thus establishing a single religion for his realm as well.

The expulsions imposed a superficial religious homogeneity, but the new converts still suffered discrimination because of their religious background and ancestry. "Old Christians" had viewed the *conversos* with suspicion for many years. Systematic discrimination against the "New Christians" in some jobs and in universities then began in mid-fifteenth-century Castile and continued for centuries. The sudden increase in the number of *conversos* in Portugal also created social and religious tensions that resulted in riots, pogroms, and an official discrimination policy forbidding New Christians to hold public offices, receive honors, or marry nobles.

Suspicion that the *conversos* were secretly practicing their former religion led Isabel in the 1470s and the Portuguese in 1547 to establish tribunals of the Inquisition to investigate the genuineness of the *conversos*' Christianity. Indeed, the Spanish Inquisition proved so effective in prosecuting converted Jews who secretly continued to observe their original faith that by 1500 it had largely met its initial goal of eliminating them.

Noble or commoner, wealthy or poor, Iberians preferred to reside in cities, towns, and villages rather than in widely scattered dwellings in the countryside. As the Christians moved south during the Reconquest, the monarchs chartered towns and granted privileges to entice occupation and settlement. Town councils were routinely established, and aldermen and officials, selected. Within Castile seventeen towns (eighteen after Granada was conquered) were represented in the *cortes*, or parliament.



Map 3 The Iberian Peninsula in the Mid-Fifteenth Century.

Cities, towns, and villages housed clerics, local officials, merchants, and artisans. Even nobles with rich estates normally spent much of the year in town houses. For the majority of the population—*labradores* who worked the small properties they owned or rented and wage-earning day laborers who worked in agriculture or pastoral activities—towns and villages were home. Most walked to fields in the adjoining countryside each workday and spent few nights away from home.

The settlement pattern of clustered residences fostered pride in the local region, the town, and adjacent rural lands that fell within its jurisdiction. Kinship ties supplemented by bonds created through godparentage resulted in tight extended family groups that were the primary social units, with political and economic overtones. Individuals tended to maintain a strong allegiance to their native region as well as to their families. Local residents regarded outsiders with suspicion; it required years of residence and the development of social and economic ties for an outsider to enter the local society.

Economy

In the late fifteenth century, only Seville, Granada, Toledo, and Lisbon had populations in excess of 30,000 persons. Thus numerous smaller communities provided many of the cultural activities and social and economic opportunities without which Iberians considered civilization nonexistent and living conditions intolerable. Urban centers were the locus of local economic exchange and social contact.

Agricultural and pastoral activities were the foundation of the Iberian economies. Although the yield was low, grain production on the Castilian plateau was ample enough in good years to permit exporting a surplus to the poorer regions of Galicia, Asturias, and Vizcaya to the west and north. In lean years, however, even Castile had to import grain from abroad, and beginning in 1502 the Crown started to fix the maximum price of grain. Portugal was chronically short of wheat and other cereals, and by 1500 imports of grain were commonplace. In contrast, Andalusia exported grain, first to Aragon and later to the New World. Olive orchards and vineyards completed the traditional triad of Mediterranean agriculture in Spain. In Portugal, wine, fruit, cork, olive oil, salt, and fish were the major products.

High-quality wool from merino sheep dominated Castile's exports in the mid-fifteenth century and continued to do so for many years. Vast numbers of sheep held by members of the *mesta*, or sheep owner's guild, migrated annually from summer pastures in Aragon to winter forage in Andalusia and Extremadura. Great aristocrats, monasteries, and small private owners sent their sheep on the great walks that traversed Castile, but even more sheep stayed home. Although restrictions prohibited owners from letting their sheep wander through planted lands, the immense size of the flocks necessarily reduced the amount of land available for agriculture. The pattern of exporting raw materials (wool) and importing finished goods (textiles) was firmly established before Henry IV's reign. Castile lacked a solid industrial base on the eve of empire and failed to develop one in the next three centuries.

Engaging in substantial foreign trade joined northern Castilians with merchants of Barcelona, Seville, and Lisbon in an international mercantile system. The Portuguese, long involved in international trade, in the second half of the fifteenth century were exporting slaves, gold, ivory, and sugar brought from Africa and the Madeira Islands as well as salt and other domestic products in exchange for finished goods. With important bases in Seville and Lisbon, Genoese financiers and merchants were an influential foreign presence in Iberian commercial circles.

The Castilian Crown employed a plethora of taxes and tariffs, but the principal source of revenue during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabel was the *alcabala*, a sales tax frequently farmed out to city councils for collection. Although the amount of regular revenue increased more than tenfold during their reign, it was never enough to support the court, the army, and Ferdinand's foreign ventures. Consequently the Crown resorted to borrowing, a recourse that ultimately had disastrous results for the succeeding Habsburg monarchs. The revenue of the Portuguese Crown also rose in the late fifteenth century, but similarly its expenses repeatedly exceeded its normal tax income.

The Iberian world of the late fifteenth century remained fragmented politically but had become substantially stronger through the union of the crowns of Castile and Aragon and the conquest of Granada. In addition, the forced conversion or exile of non-Christians, the Inquisition's activities against suspected heretics, and the imposition of royal justice had brought a unity to Castile that rivaled that achieved earlier in Portugal. The centralization of royal authority had increased in both kingdoms. The Iberian population was expanding as it continued to recover from the ravages of the fourteenth-century Black Death. The African trade and early exploitation of the Atlantic islands was benefiting Portugal. And with technological advances in sailing vessels and sailors' increased confidence in their ability to undertake lengthy voyages, the way was opened for the great era of exploration.

ATLANTIC AFRICA IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

First Contacts with Europe

Western Europe and West Africa were situated at the far western boundary of the rich medieval trade routes that distributed the products of the Eastern Hemisphere. As these commercial links increased in importance at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the economic power of the Islamic Middle East grew relative to both regions. By the mid-sixteenth century Portugal's direct entry into both African and Asian trades and Spanish and Portuguese exploration, conquest, and settlement in the Western Hemisphere had transformed these global economic and commercial arrangements. In contrast to the direct colonial rule and substantial European immigration imposed by the Iberians on their American colonies, however, most peoples of Africa remained outside of direct European domination into the nineteenth century.

The Portuguese capture of Ceuta across the Strait of Gibraltar in 1415 opened the era of exploration, trade, conquest, and settlement for the Iberian kingdoms. The arrival of the Portuguese on the Atlantic coast of sub-Saharan Africa in the fifteenth century, and the later appearance of other Europeans, initiated what would ultimately become broad changes in the region. Prince Henry, the energetic, ambitious, and wealthy younger son of John I of Portugal (1385–1433), promoted the exploration of the West African coast—earning from later generations but not contemporaries the nickname “the Navigator,” despite his personally having sailed no farther than Morocco. Progress accelerated after 1434 when an expedition finally rounded Africa's fearsome Cape Bojador on the coast of the modern territory of Western Sahara.

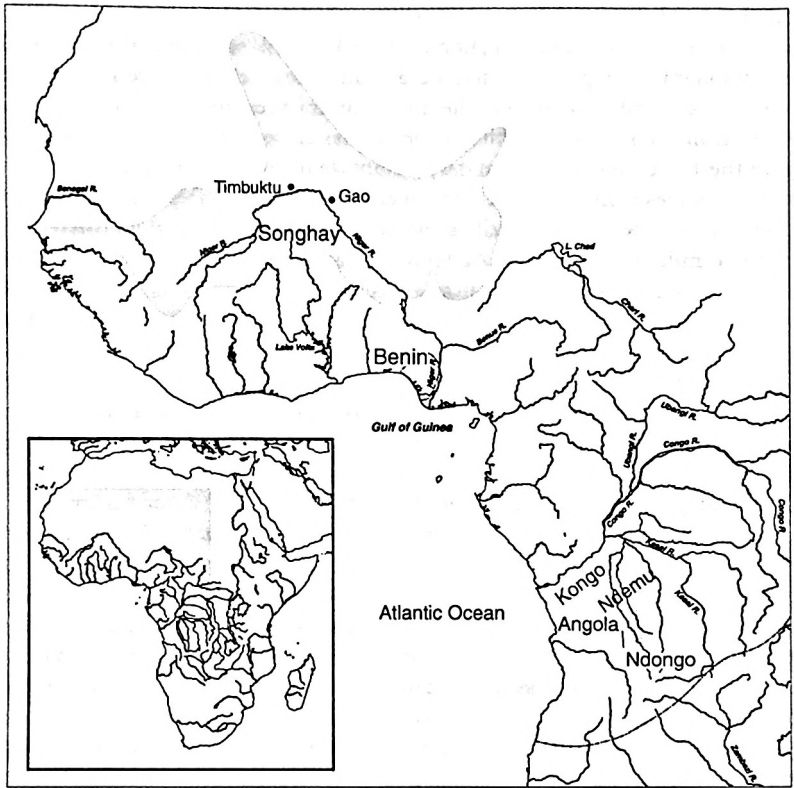
By the late fifteenth century, Portuguese ships had visited Atlantic Africa and, with the permission of native rulers, established a small number of fortified trading posts. These vulnerable commercial outposts would remain the most common form of European presence for more than three centuries. These fortress warehouses were erected at São Jorge da Mina (Elmina) in 1482 and at

other coastal sites, and Portuguese reliance on them reflected several realities. First, with the important exception of the Atlantic islands, the Portuguese generally sought quick profits from trade, avoiding the more expensive and difficult alternative of colonization and the direct control of economic resources in the African interior. Second, while larger and faster vessels armed with cannons gave the Portuguese a clear military advantage in coastal waters and estuaries, native peoples along the West African coast had considerable experience with iron and steel weapons as well as the use of cavalry in combat and were formidable military opponents. As West African states gained firearms through trade, the ability of the Portuguese and other Europeans to impose their will was further reduced. Consequently, the Portuguese could control the sea, but African kingdoms controlled the land, and native merchants, as a result, largely determined the terms of trade.

And finally, the effects of deadly local diseases, notably malaria, yellow fever, and gastrointestinal maladies, retarded any ambitions of the Portuguese or other Europeans to penetrate permanently the interior of Africa. Contemporary accounts suggest that disease killed approximately half of new European arrivals to the West African tropics within a year and another quarter within the second year. A voyage in 1588 to what the English merchants called the "great city of Benin" to purchase pepper and ivory ended in near disaster when a local fever attacked the ship's crew. In little more than a week, the fever took the lives of the captain, mate, and so many crew members that the survivors could barely pull up the anchor.

When Bartolomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1488, a sea route to India and its spices was open at last. The lure of direct maritime trade with Asia reduced even more the willingness of the Portuguese court to allocate significant resources to controlling the West African coast. They, therefore, sought to find profits within existing markets and trade routes. The richest gold mines were distant from the coast, and West African gold had long been one of the most important products traded north across the Sahara Desert. Portuguese merchants soon gained access to this profitable commodity through coastal intermediaries. They also began to trade European goods for slaves, purchasing and exporting about 2,200 slaves annually from all of Africa between 1480 and 1499. The Atlantic slave trade eventually came to dominate relations between Africa and Europe. For at least a hundred years after first contacts, however, the Portuguese and other important European coastal traders bought and sold relatively small numbers of slaves. In this era, European merchants purchased a range of African goods, including cloth, salt, gold, iron, and copper. They also paid local taxes and generally accepted restrictions imposed by African rulers.

West Africa and West Central Africa, vast regions extending from the Senegal River to the southern reaches of Angola, were home to hundreds if not thousands of ethnic groups often separated by language and other cultural differences. Here, numerous rulers of states of varied size competed for power and wealth. A large number of languages and even more dialects formed three principal linguistic zones: Upper Guinea, Lower Guinea, and West Central Africa. As in



Map 4 West and West Central Africa in the Early Sixteenth Century.

contemporary Iberia, the local and regional identities—for example, Bambara, Hausa, Jolof, Mandingo, and other ethnicities—dominated. Few fifteenth-century Iberians described themselves as “Europeans” and, similarly, the subjects of West African or West Central African polities were very unlikely to consider themselves “Africans.”

West Africa

Throughout the fourteenth century, the empire of Mali was the preeminent power in the interior of West Africa. Mande speakers dominated this empire centered in the lower Gambia and Senegal River areas. The royal court and most merchants were Muslims, but much of the countryside remained outside this faith. The empire’s wealth was displayed spectacularly in ruler Mansa Musa’s pilgrimage to Mecca. Along his route, which passed through Cairo and other powerful Muslim cities, he distributed so much gold that he drove down the price of this precious

metal for years. Ibn Battuta, who visited Mali from North Africa, provided a favorable if somewhat biased account in the 1350s:

The negroes possess some admirable qualities. They are seldom unjust, and have greater abhorrence of injustice than any other people. Their sultan (the Mansa) shows no mercy to anyone guilty of the least act of it. There is complete security in the country. Neither traveller [*sic*] nor inhabitant in it has anything to fear from robbers or men of violence.¹

Despite this wealth, Mali declined and eventually fell to the expanding Songhay empire by the middle of the fifteenth century.

Songhay's capital was Gao, but it also controlled the ancient center of learning at Timbuktu. During the reigns of Sunni Ali (d. 1492) and Askia Muhammad (d. 1538), Songhay conquered the weakened Mali empire and revived the rich trade routes across the Sahara Desert. As in Mali, the Songhay rulers in this period of rapid expansion needed to fuse the interests of a largely Muslim merchant class, crucial to the court, and a vast rural population tied to the kings in older royal rites and traditional religious practices. The political structures of Songhay were more centralized than those of Mali, with most conquered rulers replaced by royal appointees. Renowned for its learning and crafts and the success of its merchants, the Songhay empire had been created militarily, and Askia Muhammad, its most ambitious conqueror, gained the throne as a usurper whose power rested on the loyalty of the army.

Although gold remained a crucial trade item, Songhay's currency was salt or cowries, mollusk shells used as currency. In addition to gold, the empire's most important trade items were cloth, food, kola nuts, and slaves. Successful military campaigns enlarged the slave population, and these slaves allowed the empire to increase agricultural production. Visitors were impressed by the intellectual life of the capital Gao and Timbuktu, a manufacturing and commercial center that became the major center of Islamic scholarship in the region. One visitor commented on the city's commercial importance: "Here are many shops of craftsmen, especially those who weave linen and cotton cloth. To this place [Berber] merchants bring cloth from Europe. . . . The inhabitants are exceedingly rich." Another noted, "In Timbuktu there are numerous judges, doctors and clerics, all receiving good salaries from the king. . . . There is a big demand for books in manuscript, imported from Barbary. More profit is made from the book trade than from any [other] line of business."²

In the late fifteenth century, numerous small states divided the West African coast. Among them was the kingdom of Benin, located inland from the Niger River Delta. King (Oba) Ewuare established Benin's commercial and political power in the mid-fifteenth century. This expansion of Benin's political and economic influence reduced the authority of other rulers and chiefs. Benin City, the capital, was large and prosperous, as early European visitors universally testified. Women in Benin produced beautiful cotton cloth, and the kingdom's metal goods were traded throughout West Africa. Its merchants also controlled the regional trade in ivory and pepper. Even after the establishment of the Atlantic slave trade, cloth remained Benin's most important export.



The royal palace of the *oba* or king of Benin was adorned with brass plaques that told the story of court life. This plaque presents the figure of a nobleman wearing court regalia.

Following the first contacts with the Portuguese, the *oba* sent an emissary to Portugal to learn about these strangers. This ambassador returned with rich gifts, some Christian missionaries, and a new group of Portuguese merchants. The *oba* certainly recognized that European firearms could prove useful in his wars and perhaps thought the missionaries might also strengthen his power. By 1570 trade continued, but Christian missionaries had failed to convert the *oba* and his court.

Political and economic disruptions arising from the growing European presence on the coast and, more important, the pressures of the expanding Atlantic slave trade during the eighteenth century would contribute to the eventual decline of Benin.

West Central Africa

To the southeast, the kingdom of Kongo, with its capital of Mbanza Kongo, dominated a broad region that included numerous linguistically related Bantu ethnic groups. Kongo was a great regional power that faced few local threats to its political ambitions when the Portuguese appeared in 1483. Kongo's ruler, the *manikongo*, controlled numerous tributary states and direct dependencies through a bureaucracy made up mostly of kinsmen. At the end of the fifteenth century, the kingdom's population of nearly 2.5 million lived in towns whose officials and merchants administered regional political life, collected taxes, and organized commerce. Its economy relied on an important metallurgical sector as well as on highly productive agriculture. The elites perceived the political benefits that relations with the Portuguese might bring. These included desired trade goods, prestige, and enhanced spiritual power. As in Benin, Kongo had a coherent, non-Islamic religious tradition. Nonetheless, contact with the Portuguese led the *manikongo* and his court to explore Christianity. Experimentation culminated in 1491 with the baptism of the royal heir, Nzinga Mbemba. As Afonso I, he became the *manikongo* in 1507 and ruled as a Christian until the 1540s. With the encouragement of the *manikongo* and his court, Portuguese missionaries pursued conversion across the kingdom and sent many sons of important families to Portugal for instruction in the faith. Many came back fluent in Portuguese as well. Despite this success in inserting Christianity into an African kingdom, Christianity never completely replaced native religious traditions in Kongo; instead, the two religious practices melded to produce a unique local Christianity. The need for Portuguese allies is an important explanation for the Kongo elites' willingness to sanction the sale of slaves. Nonetheless, as the Portuguese presence grew and Christianity spread, the Kongo royal court began to lose power relative both to the increasingly aggressive and confident Portuguese and to the kingdom's distant tributaries that now saw the chance to assert their own power.

Central to Kongo's decline was the growing importance of the region's slave trade that connected the kingdom to the Portuguese colony of Brazil with its rapidly expanding sugar sector. Although the Kongo royal court's interests initially benefited by using some Portuguese auxiliaries in military campaigns, the predictable result was a dramatic increase in the volume of the slave trade. Warfare became a continuous part of the region's political life as armies made up of Portuguese soldiers and much more numerous native allies campaigned relentlessly. Each campaign and every victory added to the volume of the slave trade, for Kongo's elite required war captives to exchange with the Portuguese for the goods and missionaries that helped support their political power. By the early sixteenth century, Kongo kings had begun to complain of the destructiveness of the slave trade to the Portuguese authorities, even appealing directly to the pope on

numerous occasions. But it was too late: The authority of the *manikongo* and the power of the capital declined while the slave trade roiled the interior and provoked constant warfare. By the end of the sixteenth century, no African state had been more affected by the arrival of Europeans than Kongo, and nowhere else in Africa had the slave trade become more important.

In these regions of intense contact with Europeans, especially the Portuguese, African peoples incorporated elements of European culture, technology, and belief. Scholars refer to these regions as Atlantic Creole cultures. In the Kongo, for example, evangelization by Portuguese priests and African converts spread Christian belief and practice to areas outside direct control by colonial administrators. The Portuguese recruited large numbers of native military allies who, in turn, adopted European tactics, weapons, and hierarchies. At the same time the Kongo elite as well as rulers of other African allies of the Portuguese sought access to language, religious instruction, and material goods as ways of strengthening their authority and status.

The Kongo and Angola, areas where Portuguese presence was most intense, were centers of Atlantic Creole culture, but the Ndongo and Matamba, more distant from Portuguese settlement, participated in these cultural exchanges as well. This meant that a large number of slaves carried to the New World had experience with important elements of European culture, including Christian belief, language, aesthetics, and material culture, before entering the colonial orbit. Once in the colonies, these prior experiences and adaptations facilitated the rapid development of a slave community.

Slavery was well established in most of Atlantic Africa centuries before Portugal's seizure of Ceuta. Wealth rested heavily on the possession of slaves across the large empires of West Africa as well as in Benin and other kingdoms. Most slaves were taken in wars and came from distinct ethnic groups with their own religious traditions. Rulers and other slave owners used this human property as administrators, soldiers, concubines, domestic labor, field labor, miners, artisans, and in a host of other occupations. Slave owners in sub-Saharan Africa also employed their chattel in a variety of occupations. Slave laborers, for example, produced agricultural products, including millet, cotton, wheat, and rice. In the western Sudan, slaves labored in gold mines and, in some desert sites, worked in salt works. Slave owners used, sold, or traded the products of slave labor, and rulers taxed people rather than land, which was held collectively rather than as private property. In the fifteenth century, war, raiding, and kidnapping in sub-Saharan regions enabled slavers to send annually an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 victims to Islamic regions of North Africa and the Middle East via routes along the East African coast and the Red Sea, and especially across the Sahara Desert.

The Slave Trade

The Atlantic slave trade expanded during the initial century of contacts between Africans and Europeans and would continue to do so for more than 300 years. When Portuguese mariners and merchants reached West Africa, they had initially

focused on the gold trade, for the scarce, precious metal was the basis for Europe's monetary system and crucial to the growth of markets and long-distance commercial operations. Salt, pepper, ivory, and cloth also proved profitable. Building upon an existing slave trade brought additional profits.

A low ratio of people to land in much of West Africa made control over labor a key to wealth. Coupled with extensive political fragmentation that resulted in ample potential slaves located within traveling distance, this low ratio goes far to explain the development of slavery in sub-Saharan Africa. Slaves were a part of both Mali and Songhay trade and had become important to the West African regional economy as well by the time the Portuguese arrived. Backed by private investors, Portuguese merchants moved slowly down the Atlantic coast of Africa with trading goods that included textiles; copper and brass wristlets and basins; horses, saddles, bridles, and other tack; iron bars; and cowries. As the fifteenth century progressed, the importance of slaves in this trade increased. By the 1450s, fifteen slaves were traded for one horse, suggesting the expected value of slave labor. Central to this slow expansion was the use of slaves in the labor force of southern Iberia and increasingly in the sugar plantations of the Azores and São Tomé. The rapid expansion of sugar agriculture in Brazil would usher in a new era in the slave trade.

The slave trade with the Portuguese, and later with other Europeans, was initially constrained along the West African coast by the decisions of local political authorities. Slavery had an important place in the Islamic world, but rulers' restrictions on who could be enslaved limited the scale of the trade. The result was that slaves flowed only slowly from the states of the interior to the coast and the Atlantic trade. Similarly, Benin controlled the growth in slave exports, even prohibiting the export of male slaves for centuries. Nevertheless, Benin utilized slaves in its own economy and allowed Europeans to import slaves into the kingdom from other African regions as an ongoing part of their trade. Although local rulers were eventually unable to control the mounting flow of slaves crossing the Atlantic, there is no doubt that the Portuguese lacked the military power to overcome their objections during the century that followed first contacts.

Despite the pervasiveness of slavery across the region and despite slavery's economic and cultural importance prior to the arrival of the Portuguese, the historic place of slavery in Africa was essentially different from the form of slavery later developed by Europeans in their American colonies. First and foremost, the Atlantic slave trade extracted a volume of slaves never previously witnessed in Africa. As this trade matured, numbers spiraled upward until reaching their peak in the eighteenth century. Second, the distance that the trade carried its victims also necessarily altered the meaning of slavery, tearing families, ethnicities, and even polities apart by forcefully removing men and women from their native regions, cultures, languages, and religions and relocating them to the distant Americas. Finally, the Atlantic slave trade worsened the status of slaves relative to African customs, reducing legal protections and increasing the power of owners over their slaves.

Atlantic Africa and the Americas had many similarities in the fifteenth century, including numerous ethnic states, kingship, frequent wars, hierarchical social structures with strong kinship bonds, multiple religions with prominent priesthoods, indigenous slavery, a variety of languages and dialects, and sedentary agriculture. However, the consequences of contacts with Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries would be very different. Following the defeat of the Aztec and Inka, the Spaniards established direct rule in the Americas. Other than in the kingdom of Kongo, the Portuguese and other Europeans were unable to establish direct control over African peoples and depended upon the goodwill of local rulers to engage in trade until the nineteenth century. African political and military resources and the prevalence of malaria, yellow fever, and gastrointestinal ailments also slowed the advance of Europeans. With the passage of time, however, the balance of power shifted to Europeans, as measured in the growing volume of the slave trade. As a result of this cruel trade, Africa made important demographic and cultural contributions to colonial Latin America.

FIRST ENCOUNTERS IN THE NEW WORLD

First Encounters

Within this seafaring environment, an obscure Genoese seaman named Christopher Columbus appeared in Lisbon in 1476. Having already sailed in the Mediterranean and possibly to Iceland, he now joined the mariners most advanced in long-distance travel. He sailed with the Portuguese, married the daughter of one of Prince Henry's sea captains, and for a time lived in the Madeiras. A stubborn, brave man, Columbus believed that God had selected him to spread Christianity throughout the unconverted world and assumed that glory and wealth would crown his success. Unable to admit his own faults, he was loath to recognize his subordinates' virtues. Thus, despite being a capable seaman, Columbus would prove hopelessly unsuited for administrative responsibilities.

Portugal, England, and France rejected Columbus's appeals to support his scheme to reach the Indies by sailing west. His failure lay in both his demand for substantial personal rewards and an accurate scholarly appreciation that he was grossly underestimating the distance to Asia. Bartolomeu Dias's voyage further reduced Portugal's interest in the project.

Then Columbus's luck changed. Euphoric after defeating the Muslims and securing Granada, Isabel and Ferdinand agreed to support his enterprise, in the hope of great gains for God and Castile. Striking a bargain with the mariner, the monarchs granted him a patent of nobility, the offices of admiral of the ocean sea and viceroy and governor of the lands found, and a tenth of the gold, silver, spices, and other valuables obtained, in the event he was successful.

With three ships and fewer than ninety men, Columbus sailed first to the Canary Islands, confirmed as a Castilian possession in the Treaty of Alcaçovas but still not fully conquered or settled. He set forth again in early September with a

year's provisions. After sailing more than 3,000 nautical miles, the gamble paid off when on October 12, 1492, Columbus and his men sighted an island in the chain later named the Bahamas.

Further exploration revealed Española and Cuba, the two largest islands in the Greater Antilles. On Española Columbus found the gold he sought and a docile Arawak population. He lavished praise on the natives—"affectionate people and without covetousness. . . [They] are always smiling"³—whom he dubbed "Indians" as a result of believing that he had reached Asia. The Arawaks, also called the Taino, had a peaceful, sedentary, stratified society. They cultivated yucca, sweet potatoes, maize, beans, squash, and other plants and harvested fish, turtles, fowl, and other wildlife. Initially, the Arawaks shared their food with the Spaniards and, under their leaders' direction, provided voluntary labor as well. This proved especially valuable when the *Santa María* struck a reef and the dismantled wreck was used to build a fort at Navidad. Thirty-nine sailors remained there while the *Niña* and the *Pinta* returned to Spain in early 1493.

Columbus obtained enough gold through barter on Española to ensure a warm reception when he met Isabel in Barcelona in 1493. Although certain he had reached Asia as intended, Columbus found his sovereigns dubious but eager for dominion over whatever land he had reached. Following medieval custom and a more recent Portuguese precedent, they asked Pope Alexander VI, a protégé of Ferdinand, for title to the newly discovered territory in return for undertaking the Christianization of its inhabitants. The pope acceded and in a bull dated May 3, 1493, designated the lands as "islands and firm land" located in "the western parts of the Ocean Sea, toward the Indies," an identification that neither confirmed nor denied that the lands were Asiatic. A later bull gave Castile title to the lands west of a north-south demarcation line one hundred leagues west of Cape Verde and the Azores.

This papal donation limited Portugal's ambitions, thus causing John II to react strongly. Faced with the threat of war, in 1494 Castile signed the Treaty of Tordesillas. Under its terms Portugal received all lands east of a line of demarcation 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. Lands west of the line would belong to Castile, thus giving Portugal title to a portion of the as-yet-undiscovered Brazil.

Columbus's voyage inaugurated a burst of exploration that quickly enlarged Europe's geographic knowledge of the New World and the winds and currents most favorable for sailing to and from it. The intrepid admiral led three more voyages, the last ending in 1504. During these same years, a Portuguese expedition headed by Vasco da Gama reached India by sea. In 1500 Pedro Alvares Cabral followed da Gama's instructions for reaching India by sailing far southwest of Africa to catch the best winds for rounding the Cape of Good Hope. Voyaging farther west than planned, he accidentally made contact with the Brazilian coast. This unexpected development proved the wisdom of John II's insistence on revising the papal donation, although for decades the economic benefits of the Brazilian landfall were modest. In 1501 a small fleet that included the Florentine Amerigo Vespucci sailed along the southern coast of Brazil. Numerous coasting expeditions also proceeded north and south from the Caribbean, but the hoped-for strait across the landmass

proved elusive. By the mid-1520s ships had coasted from Nova Scotia in the north to Tierra del Fuego in the south. Added to Magellan's voyage, the explorations provided a view of the world's geography that differed greatly from that of a century earlier. In addition, better knowledge of winds and currents reduced the normal travel time necessary to sail to and from the Old and the New Worlds.

Early Settlements

During the same years that exploration illuminated much of the New World's geography, the first confrontations between Spaniards and Indians took place on Española and the other islands of the Greater Antilles. The quarter-century of experience on the islands revealed problems that recurred over and over when the mainlands were conquered and settled. The different realities of the New World forced the modification of Castilian institutions. Accordingly, the years between 1492 and 1519 were a period of experimentation and capital accumulation that prepared the immigrants for the advance to the mainland.

Columbus reached the Caribbean islands expecting to trade with the inhabitants and to establish factories, or fortified trading stations. This focus on commerce rather than colonization was characteristic of the earlier Genoese and Portuguese expansion in Africa and the Atlantic islands. The Castilian tradition of colonization and settlement used in the Reconquest, however, quickly came to the fore. In late 1493 Columbus returned to Española with 1,500 men who included seamen, officials, and the first clerics to venture to the New World. The second voyage was organized to establish a permanent settlement, and so the men brought animals, seed, tools, and trading goods but no European women.

Most of the early immigrants to the islands were from Andalusia. Soon, however, men from Extremadura and the remainder of Castile joined them. Although their backgrounds varied, commoners predominated, and high-ranking noblemen were conspicuously missing. As a group the immigrants had left Spain in the hope of bettering their lot. Although some sought adventure and glory, most pursued the more mundane objective of wealth. Gold or other riches would open the way to social ascent and the trappings that signified the good life as Castilians viewed it: a large residence, horses, retainers and servants, a Spanish wife, and always the ability to offer hospitality to relatives and friends. To fulfill this dream, the settlers asserted control over native labor.

Spaniards who went to the New World expected the natives to work for them. Upon his return to Navidad in 1493, Columbus found that the excesses of the men left behind had resulted in the destruction of their small settlement. The men had physically abused the natives and seized their women; revenge had followed. This incident strained future relations between the Spaniards and the Arawaks, although Columbus did distinguish between "good" or friendly Indians and those who were hostile. But the Spaniards' pillage of foodstuffs during a famine in 1494 and repeated acts of violence eventually drove the natives into a hopeless rebellion. The victors subsequently began punitive expeditions, enslaving the natives and demanding tribute payments from the remaining population.

Columbus had organized his expeditions as a monopoly company. He promised salaries but, in fact, paid his men irregularly. Dissatisfied with their lot, perhaps half of the settlers on Española joined Francisco Roldán in a revolt against the authority of the Columbus family. When the admiral returned to the island on his third voyage in 1498, he found his brother Bartolomé's authority challenged. To establish peace, Columbus recognized the grants of Indians that his rivals had made to individual Spaniards.

These allocations, or *repartimientos*, assigned a chieftain and his people to an *encomendero*, as the recipient was known, to work whatever mines and properties he held. Because they guaranteed access to needed labor and gave the recipient high status, *repartimientos* were coveted by the early Spanish settlers. With modification, this basic institution for organizing labor followed the conquistadors to the American mainlands as *encomienda*, a term long associated with nobility and conquest and its rewards in Spain. It persisted as a major labor institution for decades in some regions and for centuries in others.

Both the *repartimiento* laborers and the enslaved Indians separated from their communities were forced to toil in the fields as well as in placer gold mines. Both forms of work produced hardships. The available gold was limited in quantity, and the streams quickly played out. Accustomed to producing only enough foodstuffs for their own subsistence, the natives proved unwilling or incapable of growing enough to feed the Spaniards as well. Food shortages, malnutrition, and death resulted. The Spaniards' disillusionment was so great that when Columbus offered them the chance to return to Iberia in 1498, 300 did so, each with an Indian slave.

Subjected to new, harsh working conditions and at times enslavement, abused by the Spaniards, their society disrupted, their diet altered, and the prospect for improvement nil, the native population of perhaps a half-million in 1492 quickly began to decline, and by the mid-sixteenth century the Arawaks of Española had virtually disappeared.

This disastrous depopulation occurred for a variety of reasons. Spanish rule had turned the idyllic paradise that Columbus had described into a living hell for the natives. Nearly everything the Spaniards did created havoc on the indigenous population, but the demands they placed on the food supply and the conditions under which they made the natives live and labor were the main causes of the decline. The Laws of Burgos (1512) and other legislation to improve the natives' working conditions and to halt the decline failed. Disease, perhaps swine flu, accompanied Columbus in 1493, although smallpox apparently did not arrive until 1518, by which time there were fewer than 30,000 natives still alive.

The Dominicans in particular protested the Spaniards' abuse of the indigenous population, and in 1511 Father Antonio Montesinos condemned the Spaniards for their abominable callousness and exploitation of the Indians. "Tell me," he queried in the famous sermon, "by what right or justice do you hold these Indians in such cruel and horrible slavery? By what right do you wage such detestable wars on these people who lived idly and peacefully in their own lands, where you have consumed infinite numbers of them with unheard-of murders and desolations?"⁴

Later, Bartolomé de las Casas (1474–1566), a former *encomendero* who had witnessed the devastation of the Caribbean islands, angrily excoriated, in an endless stream of publications, his compatriots' abuse of the natives and pushed the Crown toward reform.

Critics of the Spaniards' treatment of the Indians posed the fundamental question of Spain's right to conquer and rule in the New World. The response, duly furnished by learned scholars convened by King Ferdinand, was that the papacy could, as it had done in the bulls of 1493, confer dominion over the pagans to their Christian rulers, who then would have the responsibility to convert them. If they refused Christianity and allegiance to the Castilian Crown, the Spaniards could declare a "just war" on them. After 1512 Spaniards were required to read the *requerimiento* to natives before battle. The document stated: "We protest that the deaths and losses which shall accrue from this are your fault, and not that of their highnesses, or ours, or of these soldiers who came with us."

Although the Spaniards' devastation of the native cultures of Española and other islands is beyond dispute, equally apparent was the rapid appearance of Spanish institutions in the Caribbean. In August 1496 construction began on the city of Santo Domingo. Rebuilt in 1502 after a destructive hurricane, it quickly became the first true city in Spanish America. Modeled after Santa Fe, where Isabel and Ferdinand had based their troops during the siege of Granada, Santo Domingo was built on a gridiron pattern that would be the standard form for future Spanish cities in the Americas.

Spanish society in Española centered increasingly in Santo Domingo. Although the urban focus was prevalent in Spain, it became even more pronounced in the colonies. A city provided both stability for the Spaniards' lives and social relations and the amenities of civilization that the settlers tried to reproduce wherever they went. In addition, a municipality enjoyed the important right of communicating directly with the monarch. As the center of government, Santo Domingo housed the governor of the island and, after 1511, the first high court, or *audiencia*, in the Indies. A city council, or *cabildo* (sometimes called an *ayuntamiento*), made up of local citizens (*vecinos*) appeared immediately. A cathedral was constructed in the city, and a university, the first in the Americas, was founded by 1540. As Spaniards moved to other islands in the Caribbean and then to the mainland beyond, they immediately founded municipalities. Without exaggeration one can consider the municipality, and especially its largest variation, the city, as the base for Spanish life and rule in the Indies.

The Imposition of Royal Authority

Unrest and discontent among the settlers was revealed vividly in the Roldán revolt and Columbus's failure to prevent the mistreatment of the natives or to deliver the riches he had promised. After having had these complaints investigated, Isabel and Ferdinand relieved the admiral of his administrative responsibilities on Española. They also licensed expeditions to explore and trade in the Indies, and in August 1500 a royal governor, Francisco de Bobadilla, arrived on the island to find yet

another revolt. Sent to replace Columbus, who was still in Española, the new governor acted immediately. Soon he had the admiral bound in chains and on his way to Castile in disgrace. The Crown had begun to assert its authority in the New World and to regain the prerogatives bartered away in the 1492 agreement with Columbus.

Under Bobadilla's rule, gold production increased, and the several hundred Spaniards who still remained on Española enjoyed greater prosperity. Neither the settlers nor the natives revolted, although the expanded mining brought greater disruption to Indian society and probably accelerated the population decline. A drop in royal income from the mines, because Bobadilla allowed the settlers a generous share of the gold, spurred the Crown to replace him in 1502 with Nicolás de Ovando, an experienced administrator from Extremadura.

Ovando left Spain with an expedition of 2,500 persons, including many from his native province, which henceforth became an important source of conquistadors and colonists. The largest group yet to depart for the Indies, it included a broader cross-section of Castilian society than had earlier expeditions and even some families. The availability of free native labor, antipathy toward agricultural labor, and the possibility of rapid enrichment combined to lure most new arrivals to the gold fields instead of settling into the more stable and sedentary existence the Crown had wanted.

Within two years of his arrival, Ovando extended Spanish authority throughout Española. He took the *residencia* of Bobadilla, introducing to the Indies this Castilian check on officials' conduct. Charged by the Crown to promote the natives' conversion and good treatment, he relied on the *encomienda* to fulfill this end. The *encomenderos* paid far more attention to the Indians' obligation to work, however, than to their own responsibility to instruct or take care of them. With all natives now encompassed by the institution, the level of exploitation rose and the population decreased as countless labor gangs were sent to the gold mines. Ovando established fifteen Spanish towns on the island and implemented a policy restricting Spaniards to their own municipalities and segregating them from the Indians, whose own villages were at times combined as their populations fell. This policy of "two republics," or separate existences for Spaniards and Indians, followed the colonists throughout the New World but was never fully successful, as the populations were forced to become socially and economically dependent on each other.

The Ovando years from 1502 to 1509 brought prosperity to a rapidly growing number of Spaniards. No longer did the settlers face crises of subsistence. Livestock had arrived with Columbus in the 1490s and multiplied in the following decade. Grazing pigs, cattle, and horses disrupted Indian agriculture and thus hastened the demise of the native population, which, in turn, opened more land to unchallenged grazing. Gold mining facilitated by forced Indian labor brought fortunes to some Spaniards. Others grew rich from trade as the growing number of colonists imported more goods from Spain. In 1508 forty-five ships were involved in the transatlantic trade. Successful entrepreneurs, for example, the merchants

Diego de Nicuesa and Rodrigo de Bastidas, accumulated capital that was used to expand Tierra Firme, the continental southern rim of the Caribbean.

Beyond Española

The pressures and incentives to move beyond Española were several. By 1509 little gold remained on the island, and the colonists were eager to find precious metals elsewhere. The larger Spanish population of perhaps 8,000 to 10,000, moreover, meant a greater demand for native labor at a time when the supply was rapidly disappearing. In 1503 the Crown permitted natives to be enslaved only if they had engaged in cannibalism. This restriction was frequently ignored, however, and settlers turned to other islands and the mainland as sources for Indian slaves during Ovando's tenure. The conquest of Puerto Rico began in 1508, and the enslavement of its inhabitants followed. The islands known since the seventeenth century as the Bahamas fell next to the demand for labor, and by 1513 they were depopulated. Cuba followed suit in 1511 after a successful invasion led by its governor-to-be Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar, an experienced old hand who had sailed with Columbus in 1493. The island had some gold, and the Spaniards again employed *encomienda* labor to mine it. The consequence for the Indians imitated the experience on Española: Within a decade, few remained. European livestock—pigs, cattle, and some horses—took their place.

In 1500 the exploration of Tierra Firme began. These early expeditions were generally disastrous for the Spaniards. Mortality was high, and survival rather than gold, pearls, or slaves often became the adventurers' principal concern. By the end of 1510, the Indian town of Darién in Panama became the base of operation in Tierra Firme for the few Spaniards who had survived. Blasco Núñez de Balboa, an Extremaduran who had reached the Indies in 1500, emphasized control over his men and cordial relations with the natives. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he realized that good treatment rather than enslavement, *encomienda*, or demands for excessive tribute from the natives would serve him and his men better in the long run. But Balboa, despite claiming the Pacific Ocean for Castile in 1513, lost out to more rapacious men.

Pedro Arias de Avila (Pedrarias) arrived from Spain in 1514 as governor of Castilla del Oro, as Tierra Firme was then known, with an expedition of at least 1,500 men. He settled at Darién, where illness and famine immediately struck. One contemporary reported that within months two thirds of the newcomers had died. Under Pedrarias's misrule, greed and cruelty prevailed. Balboa's policy of peace with the Indians was shattered, and he was executed in 1519 on trumped-up charges.

In their search for easily extracted wealth, by 1519 the Spaniards had devastated the Caribbean and much of Tierra Firme. The native population had been annihilated in some places and barely clung to a precarious existence in others. Despite the destructiveness of this early phase, the outline of colonial economic and political relations was in place. Trade lines to Seville were firmly established. Indian labor was organized in the *encomienda*, and European crops and livestock

had been introduced. The appointment of crown officials and the development of religious institutions restricted the authority of discoverers and early settlers. Experienced Indian fighters were numerous. Cuba, itself the result of a conquest based in Santo Domingo, was ready to serve as the base for a major advance to the North American mainland. The town of Panama would similarly serve as the initial base for expeditions to western South America. The island phase was over; the great age of conquest was at hand.

NOTES

1. Quoted in Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), p. 98, from E. W. Bovill, *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 95.
2. Shillington, *History of Africa*, p. 103; Basil Davidson, *The Lost Cities of Africa* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), p. 93.
3. Quoted in Carl Ortwin Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), p. 32.
4. Quoted in Charles Gibson (ed.), *The Spanish Tradition in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 60.

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CHAPTER 2



The Age of Conquest

CHRONOLOGY

1519	Fernando Cortés initiates conquest of Aztec Empire; creation of town of Vera Cruz
1520	Smallpox reaches New Spain—first epidemic
1521	Fall of Tenochtitlan; establishment of Mexico City
1524	Creation of Council of the Indies; arrival of twelve Franciscans initiates “spiritual conquest” in New Spain
1527–32	Civil war between Atahualpa and Huascar in Peru
1529	Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán initiates brutal conquest of New Galicia
1530	Francisco Pizarro begins conquest of Inka
1532	Capture of Atahualpa at Cajamarca
1533	Execution of Atahualpa; capture of Cuzco
1534	Quito founded
1536	Manco Inka leads rebellion in Peru; Jiménez de Quesada to Bogotá
1537	Pope Paul III declares Indians to be “truly men” and capable of Christianization; Asunción, Paraguay, founded
1538	Battle of Las Salinas and execution of Diego de Almagro
1540–42	Mixton War in New Galicia
1541	Assassination of Francisco Pizarro; Santiago, Chile, founded by Pedro de Valdivia
1542	New Laws issued
1550	“Debate” between Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in Valladolid over conquest and forced conversion of natives
1552	Publication of <i>Destruction of the Indies</i> by Bartolomé de las Casas
1570s	Spanish settlement of Philippine Islands
1580	Founding of Buenos Aires; Brazil emerges as leading sugar producer in the world

THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO

The conquest of Mexico made real the Spaniards’ dreams of finding great wealth in the New World and initiated a frenzy of new expeditions led by men anxious to emulate this remarkable success. For the daring and imaginative Fernando Cortés, the conquest brought riches, a title of nobility, and fame, and the Castilian Crown secured new lands, vassals, and revenue. For the native population of the

Americas, in contrast, the conquest ushered in epidemic diseases, depopulation, and centuries of forced subservience to foreign masters.

Organizing the Expedition

Bored by the study of law and fortunate to have escaped death at the hands of a jealous husband, Cortés chose to leave Spain and seek his fortune in the New World. Reaching Española from Extremadura in 1504 at the age of nineteen, he benefited from personal connections and received an *encomienda*. He was recruited by Diego Velázquez to serve as his clerk during the expedition to conquer and settle Cuba. Rewarded for his bravery and service with an *encomienda* of local Taíno, Cortés sought riches through trade and the exploitation of natives. Spaniards reconnoitering to the west brought news that disrupted his placid existence.

Participants in an exploration and trading expedition that reached the Yucatan in 1517 returned to Cuba with word of a populous civilization far wealthier than the indigenous cultures of the Caribbean. Governor Velázquez immediately sent a larger and better-equipped force commanded by his cousin Juan de Grijalva back to the land of the Maya. Although the expedition suffered some military reverses as the 4 ships and 200 men made landings along the Gulf coast to Tabasco, it collected enough gold to demonstrate the region's richness. Without fully realizing the importance of the encounter, members of the expedition also met with an emissary sent by the Aztec ruler Moctezuma who, along with his advisors, was already aware of earlier Spanish contacts through first-hand accounts, including drawings of these strange men and their great ships. Discouraged by his cousin's lack of audacity, Velázquez appointed Cortés to lead a third expedition. His recruits included Bernal Díaz del Castillo who later wrote a richly detailed and beautifully told history of the conquest. As the date of departure approached, Velázquez correctly sensed that Cortés was too ambitious and headstrong to remain loyal. Warned that the governor wanted to remove him from command, Cortés cut short his preparations and set sail on February 18, 1519, with over 500 men, 11 ships, 16 horses, and some artillery.

First Contacts

Within weeks of landfall, Cortés had the good fortune to secure two translators. Jerónimo Aguilar, a Spanish survivor of a 1511 shipwreck, had learned Maya during his captivity in the Yucatan. An Indian woman, Malintzin, who spoke both Maya and Nahuatl was offered to the Spaniards as a gift. Later known as Doña Marina, she became a key native informant and translator for Cortés and later bore him a son. Translating in tandem with Aguilar, she provided him with a tremendous political advantage over the Aztec emissaries forced to rely on the Spaniards' translators. In addition, she gave Cortés crucial intelligence, in some cases saving the Spaniards from military disaster.

In battles with Maya settlements along the coast of Yucatan and again on his march into the interior, Cortés used his military assets with devastating effect. The natives of Mesoamerica fought in massed ranks with slings, spears, two-handed swords edged with obsidian, and bows and arrows. But mounted Spaniards, organized in



Early image of Fernando Cortés, the conqueror of Mexico.

groups of five or ten, could quickly flank these native formations or charge directly and break them up. Even when unfavorable terrain limited the cavalry's mobility, the close-order organization of the Spanish infantry combined with their firearms, steel swords, and armor gave the invaders an advantage. With each victory, moreover, Cortés incorporated into his force the defeated warriors of the Aztec subject states. By the final stage of his campaign, Indian auxiliaries vastly outnumbered the Spanish conquistadors and contributed immeasurably to Cortés's success.

The Spaniards also had the great advantage of fully realizing the political consequences of their arrival. Their earlier participation in conquests in the Caribbean gave them the confidence to compromise and temporize with native leaders until they were strong enough to impose their will. They assumed they were inherently superior to the natives and that their Christian God would lead them to victory. Indigenous leaders, not perceiving that Spanish success would threaten the very survival of their social hierarchies, culture, and political organization, weighed the efficacy of resisting or allying themselves with the invaders in a context dominated by traditional, local concerns.

Because Cortés had left Cuba in rebellion, he needed to legitimize his command and neutralize the disgruntled men still loyal to Governor Velázquez. He solved this problem by founding a city, Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz (today Veracruz) and establishing a municipal government that then selected him as its chief military and judicial officer. He further solidified his power by ordering his small fleet destroyed. Cut off from Cuba and unwilling to contest Cortés's newly created local authority, remaining Velázquez supporters in the expedition accepted the new reality and joined the march inland.

Native Allies

Upon reaching Cempoala, the Spaniards were greeted by a friendly *cacique* who provided them with first-hand information about Tenochtitlan. He also revealed to Cortés the antipathy that subject peoples felt toward Aztec domination, information that suggested some of these satellites could be recruited as allies. When Aztec tribute collectors arrived, Cortés convinced the Cempoalans to arrest them. Terrified by the possible repercussions of this treason but reassured by Spanish military strength, the Cempoalans complied. Cortés had gained his first native ally. Yet, at the same time, he sought to avoid direct confrontation with the Aztec ruler. Playing a subtle strategy, he released the prisoners and sent them to Moctezuma with protestations of friendship.

Joined by their new ally, the Spaniards continued to march toward the Valley of Mexico via the territory of the fiercely independent Tlaxcalans. Seeing the Cempoalans, the Tlaxcalans presumed that the Spaniards were allies of the hated rulers of Tenochtitlan and fought them ferociously. For the first time the Spaniards lost valuable horses, of which they had brought only sixteen, and suffered numerous casualties. The intense pressure almost broke the Spanish formation, but discipline was maintained while their weapons forced the Tlaxcalans to retire with heavy losses. After further days of fierce fighting, the Tlaxcalans at last sought peace and swore fealty to Charles I. Their loyalty to Spain and military assistance to Cortés would prove crucial to the Spanish victory.

Entering the Tlaxcalan capital, Cortés saw for the first time the urban development of the Mesoamerican heartland:

This city is so big and so remarkable [as to be] . . . almost unbelievable, for the city is much larger than Granada and very much stronger, with as good buildings and many more people than Granada had when it was taken, and very much better supplied with the produce of the land, namely, bread, fowl and game and freshwater fish and vegetables and other things they eat which are very good. There is in this city a market where each and every day upward of thirty thousand people come to buy and sell, without counting the other trade which goes on elsewhere in the city.¹

Both the indigenous tribute system and the urban-based political order suited perfectly the needs and resources of the conquistadors. A small number of Spaniards could control an enormous area and draw off huge amounts of wealth by usurping the traditional prerogatives of the native urban elite.

Moctezuma's agents arrived soon after Tlaxcala's submission and attempted to convince Cortés that the Tlaxcalans would betray him. Now appreciating how serious the Spanish threat was, they presented Moctezuma's offer to become a tributary of Charles I if Cortés abandoned his march. Cortés replied politely but informed the ambassadors that he would greet their lord in Tenochtitlan. As the Spaniards approached the Mexica capital, thousands of Tlaxcalan warriors reinforced them. Along their route the new allies entered Cholula, an Aztec tributary. Informed of a possible surprise attack, the Spaniards and their native allies massacred some 6,000 residents. Convinced by this action that the invaders and their allies were militarily invincible, Moctezuma henceforth made only half-hearted efforts to dissuade them from reaching the capital.

The Aztec Capital

Cortés led his force across the volcanic mountain chain that forms the southeastern boundary of the Valley of Mexico and stood looking down on the splendid complex of cities, lakes, and canals that served as the metropolis of Mesoamerican civilization. Bernal Díaz wrote years later:

And when we saw all those cities and villages built in the water, and other great towns on dry land, and that straight and level causeway leading to Mexico, we were astounded. These great towns and *cues* [temples], and buildings rising from the water, all made of stone, seemed like an enchanted vision. . . . Indeed some of our soldiers asked whether it was all not a dream. . . . It was all so wonderful that I do not know how to describe this first glimpse of things never heard of, seen or dreamed of before²

For the first time, Cortés and his followers fully appreciated their momentous undertaking.

Members of the royal court and finally Moctezuma himself met the Spaniards as they crossed the broad causeway into the capital. After an exchange of ritual gifts in which the ruler stirred the invaders' cupidity by providing items of gold, the presents he knew the Spaniards valued most, he personally led Cortés and his men to quarters in the palace of his father, Axayacatl.

The splendors of Moctezuma's court with its elaborate rituals and opulence impressed the Spaniards. Yet their precarious position in the heart of the Aztec capital was frightening. In a characteristically audacious move, Cortés sought to strengthen his position by forcing Moctezuma under the threat of death to move to rooms in Axayacatl's palace.

The seizure of their ruler provoked a deep crisis among the highest levels of Aztec society. Moctezuma's failure to resist the invaders militarily had already angered many of his closest advisers and kinsmen. Once the undisputed ruler of Mesoamerica's greatest empire, the hostage was now merely a pawn of the foreigners and their indigenous allies. But, despite public signs of submission, Cortés could not be certain that the traditional political discipline of this authoritarian and hierarchical state would hold firm. Popular resistance might still erupt.

Despite the weakness of his position, Cortés aggressively asserted his authority. From his arrival on the coast of Mesoamerica, he encouraged proselytization among the native population and sought to demonstrate the impotence and futility of their gods. Repeatedly, he overrode the advice of Spanish clerics to proceed slowly to avoid inflaming religious passions. Military victory whetted his efforts to promote Christianity, and the subsequent assaults on indigenous beliefs were often unrestrained. Spaniards drove native priests from some temple precincts and threw down and defaced their religious symbols. After cleaning the temples of evidence of human sacrifices and whitewashing their interiors, Spaniards replaced the stone image of Huitzilopochtli or another native god with a cross and the image of the Virgin Mary. The political significance of symbols of the conquerors' religion replacing those of the Mesoamerican gods was apparent to both the invaders and the vanquished.

Threats to Cortés

News that a large Spanish expedition loyal to the governor of Cuba had arrived on the Gulf coast complicated Cortés's plans. Yet, with his usual determination, he turned the threat to his advantage. Leaving a garrison in Tenochtitlan under Pedro de Alvarado, Cortés marched to the coast and smashed the larger force of Pánfilo de Narváez in a daring night attack. Then, by treating the defeated men generously and promising great riches, he succeeded in winning most of them to his side. Upon reaching Tenochtitlan, the enlarged force received the distressing news that the Aztec had risen against the Spanish garrison.

During a major religious celebration, Alvarado had ordered his men to attack the unarmed crowd gathered in Tenochtitlan's central square. The onslaught cost many Aztec nobles their lives, enraged the city's populace, and provoked a massive popular uprising. Alvarado later claimed that the natives had planned to use the celebration as cover for an attack on the weakened garrison, but his assault, like the massacre that Cortés had ordered at Cholula, is generally viewed as a brutal and unprovoked attack on an unprepared civilian population.

The Aztec made no effort to hinder the Spaniards' reentry into the capital, thus trapping them where their horses and weapons were less effective. Cortés and his reinforced column soon felt the full brunt of the natives' rage. Although the Spaniards' harquebuses and small cannon claimed many victims, the Aztec nearly succeeded in forcing the palace walls defended by the Spanish. Moctezuma perished during this attack but whether at the hands of Spaniards or natives is uncertain. Convinced that defeat was imminent, Cortés decided to flee under cover of darkness. His men made careful preparations to avoid detection, covering the horses' hooves with cloth and constructing portable bridges to span gaps cut in the causeway. Finally, they divided the loot obtained since reaching Mexico. Many loaded themselves down with gold and silver, sacrificing physical mobility in flight for the promise of social mobility later. For hundreds their greed proved a deadly miscalculation.

Despite the Spaniards' efforts to escape undetected, the Aztec attacked them before they cleared the first causeway gap. All pretense of discipline and military

order collapsed under the onslaught. Cortés lost more than 400 Spaniards, 4,000 native allies, and many horses before reaching the mainland. June 30–July 1, 1520 truly had been *La Noche Triste* (the sorrowful night) for the Spaniards. Confident of total victory, Aztec warriors boasted that they would soon sacrifice the survivors. The desperate Spaniards could, in fact, look back across the causeway and see their captured compatriots being marched up the steps of Huitzilopochtli's temple for sacrifice. Bernal Díaz later related that over half the Spaniards in Mexico had been killed.

Yet even this terrible defeat proved to be only a temporary setback for Cortés. The Tlaxcalans remained allies and provided a safe haven while he rested and resupplied his forces. Native armies recruited from Tlaxcala and other allied Indian states joined the Spaniards for a final assault on the Aztec capital. Realizing after *La Noche Triste* that he must turn Tenochtitlan's island location to his advantage, Cortés ordered the construction of a fleet of small brigantines that would allow him to cut off the capital from its mainland supplies of food and water. The boats were built and disassembled in Tlaxcala and then carried to a canal that entered Lake Texcoco. There the Spaniards and their allies quickly reassembled and launched the vessels armed with small canons.

Spanish Victory

Cortés divided his force into three columns and began to move up the broad causeways that linked the capital to the mainland. His brigantines immediately proved their value by defeating a large force of Aztec warriors in canoes. Despite the heroic resistance of the city's garrison and the stoic suffering of a population denied adequate food and water by the blockade, the Spaniards slowly pushed toward the city center. At first they found it difficult to consolidate their gains, for each night the defenders retook the buildings that the Spaniards had occupied during the day. Accordingly, Cortés ordered his Indian auxiliaries to pull down buildings once captured to prevent their reoccupation.

The Spanish siege was aided by an unexpected ally, smallpox. Having first appeared in the Caribbean with devastating effect in 1518, the disease was introduced to Mesoamerica by one of Narváez's soldiers who had joined Cortés. In the confined space of the besieged city, the disease spread quickly, killing tens of thousands in a population already weakened by starvation. A native account of the conquest states: "We were covered with agonizing sores from head to foot. The illness was so dreadful that no one could walk or move."³ Moctezuma's successor, Cuitlahuac, was among the first victims. Following his death, authority passed to his eighteen-year-old brother Cuauhtemoc. Because the Spaniards suffered no apparent effects from the disease, the epidemic served to confirm the most pessimistic assessments of Spanish invincibility and the impotence of native gods.

On August 21, 1521, as the Spaniards breached the capital's last defenses, Cuauhtemoc attempted to flee by canoe but was captured by a brigantine. Tenochtitlan, one of the grandest achievements of the Mesoamerican world, was now little more than a pile of rubble. Bernal Díaz remembered: "We found the houses full of

corpses, and some poor Mexicans still in them who could not move away. . . . The city looked as if it had been ploughed up. The roots of any edible greenery had been dug out, boiled and eaten, and they had even cooked the bark of some of the trees.”⁴

Although Cortés emerged victorious, the spoils were far less than anticipated. During the debacle of La Noche Triste, the Spaniards had lost much of the treasure accumulated since their arrival in Mexico. Although valuable booty was found in Tenochtitlan’s ruins, few of the Spaniards received the abundance of gold, silver, or rich *encomiendas* they had expected. Their disappointment produced some ugly confrontations among the victors and led Cortés to sanction the brutal torture of Cuauhtemoc in the desperate hope of discovering hidden treasure. Unable to satisfy expected rewards, he provided a controlled outlet for his men’s destructive energies by personally financing expeditions led by his lieutenants into unpacified territories.

Cortés’s decision to execute Cuauhtemoc in 1525 ended the line of Mexica rulers. The Spaniards continued to recognize the “natural rulers” of Mexico who unambiguously accepted the new colonial order and accommodated them in the short term. They even granted Tlaxcalans and other military allies a privileged status. But the surviving conquistadors and more recent arrivals from Spain and from the older colonies of the Caribbean were now the indisputable lords of the land. Many of these men took Indian mistresses, and a few married Indian women. Doña Marina, Cortés’s translator and the mother of his first son, for example, married a Spanish veteran of the conquest and became a respected member of early colonial society. The first-generation *mestizo* children that resulted from the longer-lived unions often identified with the culture and religion of their Spanish fathers and became an important bulwark of colonial rule. Many served in Spanish military units during the following decades when native resistance continued along the northern and southern frontiers of Mesoamerica. Despite the determined opposition of native peoples, in the densely populated regions of New Spain, as the conquered territory was known, Spanish authority was firmly established by the 1550s.

THE CONQUEST OF PERU

The fall of the Inka Empire climaxed the initial era of Spanish expansion in the Americas. Later expeditions continued to pursue rumored El Dorados, and Spaniards and their *mestizo* offspring settled vast new regions. Yet the participants, their financial backers, and the Castilian Crown considered each of these new achievements, often won at an exorbitant human cost, a failure when compared with Francisco Pizarro’s spectacular success in Peru.

Early Expeditions

The illegitimate and poorly educated son of a modest Extremaduran noble, Pizarro emigrated to the New World as a young man. After a brief and unexceptional stay

in Española, he joined an expedition to the Isthmus of Panama where he gained military experience. As an *encomendero* and one of the founders of the city of Panama, Pizarro was in midlife a prosperous citizen of a small and obscure city on Spain's expanding American frontier.

In 1522 an exploratory expedition sailed south from Panama along the Pacific coast. The voyage produced little more than rumors of a rich and powerful kingdom to the south, but that was enough to spur a new round of explorations. Governor Pedrarias selected Francisco Pizarro and two partners, Diego de Almagro and the priest Hernando de Luque, to lead the next expedition. In 1524 Pizarro sailed south but was forced to return to Panama after battles with hostile natives. His second effort began even more disastrously, forcing him to seek shelter on the island of Gallo. Refusing an opportunity to turn back, Pizarro and thirteen men remained. When Almagro appeared with reinforcements and supplies seven months later, the expedition's fortune improved. One of its ships captured a large ocean-going raft laden with gold and silver jewelry, finely woven textiles, and precious stones. Now, with irrefutable proof that the rumored civilization existed, the adventurers pushed further south, reaching Tumbez, a northern outpost of the Inka Empire.

Despite this evidence of a rich civilization, Pizarro and Almagro were unable to gain additional support from the new governor of Panama. After borrowing more capital, the partners sent Pizarro to Spain to seek a royal license for their next expedition. There he secured a contract (*capitulación*) naming him governor of Peru and ennobling the thirteen men who had persevered with him on the island of Gallo. Significantly, Almagro received only the minor title of governor of Tumbez. Before returning to Panama, Pizarro stopped in his birthplace, Trujillo, where he recruited four brothers and a cousin, other kinsmen, and neighbors for his next expedition.

The unequal rewards spelled out in the royal contract strained Pizarro's relations with Almagro, but the partners resolved their differences. In late December 1530, Pizarro set sail from Panama with fewer than 200 men. Almagro agreed to follow this vanguard with reinforcements and supplies. After advancing slowly down the coast, Pizarro reached Tumbez. Here evidence of destruction and depopulation revealed that the Inka were engaged in civil war. Joined by a small force led by Hernando de Soto, the expedition proceeded about one hundred miles to the south. There Pizarro founded the city of San Miguel de Piura and awarded *encomiendas* to the Spaniards he would leave behind as a garrison to protect his communication with Panama.

Although Pizarro and his lieutenants did not immediately realize it, they were challenging the Inka at a particularly propitious moment. In the late 1520s, an epidemic had swept through the northern reaches of the empire. Identified as smallpox by some scholars and as the less well-known bartonellosis, a disease of similar symptoms, by others, the epidemic claimed countless victims, including the extremely vigorous and effective Huayna Capac, the Sapa Inka, and his heir apparent. As in Mexico disease proved a powerful ally to the Spaniards.

The deaths of Huayna Capac and his heir provoked a deep political crisis among the Inka. As he pushed the empire's frontier northward into modern Colombia, Huayna Capac had depended increasingly on professional troops and military advisers rather than the traditional Inka bureaucracy. As a result, the capital, Cuzco, had lost both prestige and power. Thus, when news of the Sapa Inka's death reached Cuzco, the court elite immediately confirmed his son Huascar as successor. In Quito another son, Atahualpa, controlled the professional army and retained political control over the newly conquered regions of Ecuador and southern Colombia. A strained peace between the brothers held for nearly two years before Atahualpa rebelled. Disputed successions were not unusual among the Inka, and nearly every Sapa Inka had had to prove his authority militarily. The appearance of Pizarro's tiny expedition transformed this internecine struggle and threatened the survival of the Inka state.

Huascar seized the initial advantage and briefly made Atahualpa his prisoner. However, the large, well-disciplined, and experienced armies that Atahualpa had inherited from his father soon overwhelmed the untried forces from Cuzco. Atahualpa's troops took the Inka capital, captured Huascar, and launched a brutal campaign against members of the royal family and nobility who had supported his brother. Recruited largely from the empire's northern frontier, the victors acted like an occupying army, singling out for particularly harsh treatment the Cañari ethnic group that had provided much of Huascar's experienced military support.

Pizarro's route south brought him close to a large military force escorting Atahualpa to Cuzco. Informed earlier of the strangers' landing, the Sapa Inka had sent a trusted adviser into their camp to collect intelligence. Unfortunately for Atahualpa his ambassador dismissed the Spaniards as an insignificant fighting force and arrogantly claimed that he could take them prisoner with a few hundred men. Pizarro, on the other hand, received remarkably good information about the Inka. He not only knew about the civil war but also managed to communicate with both camps through Indian youths he had captured on an earlier expedition and who now served him as interpreters and spies.

Cajamarca

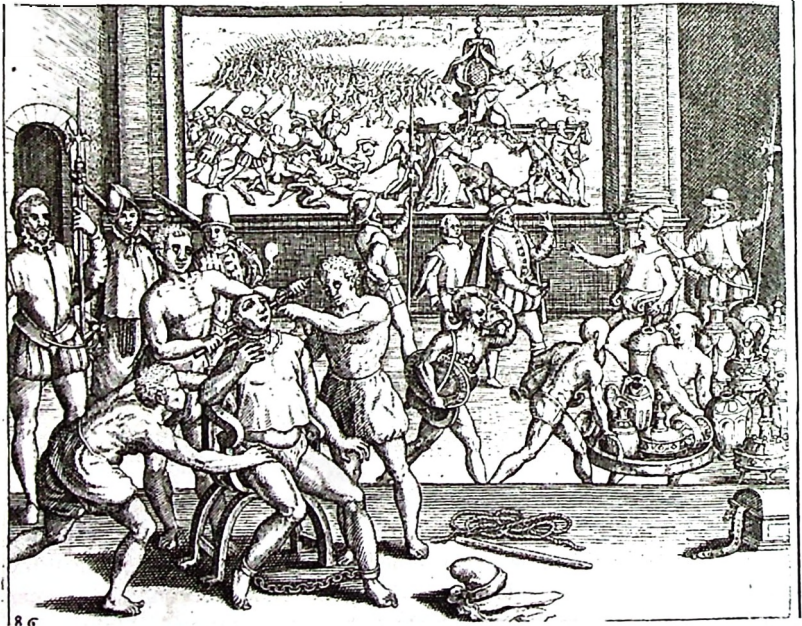
As the Spanish and Inka forces approached the valley of Cajamarca, Pizarro sent a detachment of cavalry to invite Atahualpa to meet. The Sapa Inka at last agreed. That night Pizarro and his captains determined to risk everything by attempting to capture Atahualpa, a stratagem used successfully by Cortés in Mexico. But, with a victorious Inka army at least 40,000 strong camped across the valley, the invaders realized their situation was precarious.

Not suspecting Pizarro's plans, Atahualpa left most of his armed soldiers on the plain in front of Cajamarca and entered the city's central plaza accompanied by 5,000 to 6,000 lightly armed retainers and servants. At a prearranged signal, the Spaniards, who had been hidden from view, fired arquebuses and two cannons into the crowded square. Their cavalry then charged into the massed Inka formations, cutting down men by the score. Unable to defend themselves, Atahualpa's

retainers attempted to flee but were blocked by the city's adobe walls. Many were crushed to death as they struggled to escape. As the walls collapsed and the terrified survivors fled onto the plain, the waiting troops panicked as well. In pursuit the Spanish cavalry sealed the victory. In the square, Pizarro and his companions forced their way to Atahualpa, taking him captive.

The results of November 16, 1532, were remarkable even to the participants. Although not a single Spaniard was killed and only a few suffered superficial wounds, at least 1,500 natives, and by some accounts many more, perished, and thousands more were wounded. Surrounded by a victorious army and misinformed about Spanish weapons, the Sapa Inka had underestimated the invaders' fighting potential and stumbled into a well-sprung trap. Without pikes or other means to stop the charging horses, the Inka foot soldiers were nearly defenseless. Their long-distance weapons—stones, arrows, and light spears—had little effect against the Europeans' armor.

The capture of Atahualpa and the unexpected military disaster paralyzed an Inka state already shaken by civil war. Without orders from their monarch, Atahualpa's generals hesitated to act, fearing a direct attack would cost his life. The defeated supporters of Huascar, on the other hand, now perceived the Spaniards as potential allies against their bitter enemy. Housed in the building in which Pizarro resided, Atahualpa shared his meals with the Spanish leaders and tried to determine



A sixteenth-century depiction of the execution by garroting of Inka ruler Atahualpa.

their plans. Pizarro guessed correctly that he could compel his captive to serve Spanish interests. Atahualpa, having observed the plundering of Cajamarca and his abandoned military camp, mistakenly believed that the invaders would leave Peru after seizing whatever treasure they could find. This erroneous belief prompted his offer to ransom himself by filling a large room with gold and another twice over with silver. Pizarro quickly accepted and promised to free the Sapa Inka and establish him in his former capital of Quito once the terms were fulfilled. Atahualpa then sent agents throughout the empire to collect and transport gold and silver to Cajamarca.

It is clear that, in a futile effort to protect his own political ambitions, Atahualpa squandered any opportunity to save the Andean peoples from Spanish domination. Despite the events at Cajamarca, his generals still commanded several undefeated armies, whereas the Spaniards were isolated geographically and months away from reinforcements and supplies. But Atahualpa, an absolute monarch even while a prisoner, used his authority to organize the collection and delivery of his ransom rather than to order an attack on his captors.

Atahualpa's rule, however, was recent and fragile, the result of his crushing military defeat of Huascar. Once Pizarro discovered that one of the Sapa Inka's generals held Huascar captive, he demanded that Atahualpa's rival be delivered safely to the Spanish camp. Instead, Atahualpa, who still thought Huascar and his supporters were the primary threat to his authority, ordered his brother's execution. This political murder was not, however, an isolated incident but only the latest royal murder ordered by Atahualpa.

Hoping to gain his freedom, the still powerful Sapa Inka encouraged Pizarro to send some Spaniards to help organize the collection and delivery of his ransom. He identified temples at Cuzco and the ancient pre-Inka temple of Pachacamac as particularly valuable. By targeting certain southern shrines located in areas that had supported Huascar, Atahualpa pursued retribution for political disloyalty; the recent civil war still colored his every move. Pizarro duly dispatched small groups of Spaniards to various parts of the empire, and gold and silver flowed back to Cajamarca.

Atahualpa's ransom proved worthy of a great king. The Spaniards melted down 11 tons of worked gold to produce 13,420 pounds of 22-carat gold and obtained another 26,000 pounds of pure silver. Each infantryman present with Pizarro at Cajamarca received as his share the incredible sum of 45 pounds of gold and 90 pounds of silver (roughly a million dollars in 2017, but with much greater purchasing power). As was common in all Spanish expeditions, a cavalryman received double the foot soldier's share, and the captains, even more. Francisco Pizarro received 630 pounds of gold and 1,260 pounds of silver, seven times the share of a cavalryman. This huge treasure made him one of the richest nobles in the Iberian world. Shortly after the ransom's division, Diego de Almagro arrived with 150 reinforcements. The miniscule shares he and his men received from Pizarro further fueled his already deep resentment and gave rise to lasting factionalism.

With the ransom distributed, Cuzco beckoned with its great wealth and large population. But Atahualpa posed a problem. Almagro and the most recent arrivals wanted him executed as a traitor so that no subsequent loot could be construed

as part of his ransom. They claimed that Inka armies were massing for attack and used some local officials to corroborate Atahualpa's guilt. Pizarro at first hesitated to execute a reigning monarch but then yielded to the pressure. There was neither a trial nor an opportunity for a defense: provoked into action by fear and greed, Pizarro and his captains simply sentenced the Sapa Inka to death by burning in July 1533. But because the priest Valverde had convinced Atahualpa to accept Christian baptism, he was executed by garroting instead.



Portrait of Francisco Pizarro, painted in the late colonial period long after the conqueror's death.

Consolidation of Spanish Power

Despite executing Atahualpa, Pizarro realized that maintaining the fiction of a continuing Inka sovereignty would prove useful and quickly appointed a compliant successor, Tupac Huallpa. When this willing puppet died on the march to Cuzco, his brother Manco Inka replaced him. In addition to these political actions, the march to Cuzco produced the conquest's first large-scale pitched battles. Spanish mounted units of fewer than one hundred men defeated the same army that had easily crushed the forces of Huascar and taken Cuzco. In this conflict, Pizarro, like Cortés earlier in Mexico, had the support of indigenous allies. The Cañari and other ethnic groups that supported Huascar in the civil war now seized an opportunity to take revenge on Atahualpa's surviving generals. By the time Pizarro reached the Inka capital, the remnants of the Sapa Inka's once-proud army fled north toward Quito.

Cuzco yielded an even greater treasure than Atahualpa's ransom, and Almagro and his men now received a substantial share. Nonetheless, tensions between the Almagro and Pizarro factions continued. The two leaders decided to mount a new expedition to probe the southern frontier of the Inka realm in the hope that Almagro would be able to imitate the victory at Cajamarca. Pizarro supplied much of the necessary capital while Almagro received command of a force that included thousands of Andean auxiliaries supplied by Manco Inka. Pizarro also left Cuzco, believing that the highland city would remain politically and militarily isolated and vulnerable. Unlike Cortés who built his colonial capital on the ruins of Tenochtitlan, Pizarro founded a new capital near the coast on January 5, 1535. Named Ciudad de los Reyes because it was founded on Epiphany, it was soon known as Lima, a corruption of its native name. The extraordinary riches the Spaniards seized in Peru immediately lured compatriots to the Andean region from Spain and more established colonies.

Inka Rebellion

In Cuzco Manco Inka ruled a shadow kingdom. Both Almagro and Francisco Pizarro had treated him with great courtesy and had sought to protect the useful fiction of his independent authority. But even though Manco enjoyed immense prestige among the indigenous population, the lowliest Spaniard considered himself the Sapa Inka's superior. Spanish exactions and mistreatment finally pushed the defeated Andeans too far; the factions of the civil war were ready to unite and rebel under Manco's leadership. Although the Sapa Inka's first effort to flee miscarried, he eventually escaped Cuzco and joined his troops. In early 1536, supported by an army of as many as 50,000, Manco began to besiege Cuzco while subordinate commanders moved to attack other Spanish settlements.

During the three years since the Spanish surprise attack at Cajamarca, Inka commanders had learned how to neutralize some of the invaders' military advantages. By waiting patiently until the Spaniards were deployed in steep terrain where their horses could not charge, the Inka could maintain their positions and crush them under a rain of rocks, arrows, and spears. Using this approach, Inka

troops annihilated large expeditions sent from Lima to relieve the siege at Cuzco. Indeed, the number of Spanish casualties far exceeded the number of Spaniards who had been present with Pizarro at Cajamarca.

Despite winning several battles, however, Manco's troops failed to dislodge the Spaniards from Peru. The inability of his large native army to force fewer than 200 Spaniards to surrender in Cuzco demonstrated definitively the permanence of Pizarro's victory. Similarly, a direct attack on Lima by an Inka army loyal to Manco led to complete defeat by a Spanish force led by Pizarro himself. Forced to recognize his inability to comprehensively defeat the Spanish, Manco lifted the Cuzco siege and retreated toward Vilcabamba, where he and his heirs maintained an independent Inka kingdom until 1572.

Civil War

Persistent divisions within the Spanish ranks undermined their victories. During the last stage of the siege of Cuzco in 1537, the disillusioned and embittered survivors of Almagro's disastrous expedition returned from Chile, having endured unimaginable hardships. Nearly all the native porters and scores of Spaniards had died during the difficult Andean crossings. Almagro now sought to assert his right to govern this important city. Having just defeated Manco's warriors, however, the Pizarro family was in no mood to compromise with an ally turned rival.

During the hostilities with Manco, Almagro used his superior force to enter Cuzco and arrest Pizarro's brothers Gonzalo and Hernando. Gonzalo escaped, but Francisco Pizarro still agreed to Almagro's demand to govern Cuzco to secure Hernando's freedom. Within days of this accord, both sides began preparing for war. When the contending armies met near Cuzco in 1538, Pizarro was victorious, capturing and later executing his former partner Almagro.

Peace again proved an illusion. Almagro's son, also named Diego de Almagro, inherited leadership of his father's supporters and rejected the Pizarro family's efforts to mollify him. The faction's continued frustration ultimately erupted in violence. In 1541 a group of twenty heavily armed supporters of young Almagro stormed Pizarro's palace in Lima, assassinated him, and then forced the terrified city council to appoint the plot's leader as the new governor of Peru.

The younger Almagro's rebellion was doomed from the outset. Upon hearing of the civil war, Charles I sent Cristóbal Vaca de Castro to be governor of Peru and to end the political chaos. Arriving soon after Pizarro's assassination, Vaca de Castro quickly organized the Pizarro loyalists and in September 1542 defeated the young Almagro's forces. Although the unfortunate youth may have been only a figurehead for the unhappy partisans of his father, he paid with his life for Pizarro's murder. In this conflict and those that followed, the contending Spanish contestants actively recruited armed support from hereditary Andean leaders.

Vaca de Castro and the supporters of the Pizarros had little time to savor their triumph. In November 1542, Charles I issued the famous New Laws, an effort to improve conditions for the New World's indigenous peoples and to prevent the

encomenderos from becoming a true nobility. The New Laws threatened *encomenderos* throughout the Indies, for, among other things, they ordered that their *encomiendas* revert to the Crown after their death. For the *encomenderos* in Peru, one provision was even more ominous, stating, "Indians are to be taken away from the persons responsible for the disturbances between Pizarro and Almagro." As the chronicler Agustín de Zárate later noted, "It is clear that no one in Peru could retain his Indians."⁵

Brought to Peru by the colony's first viceroy, Blasco Núñez Vela, the New Laws and the ill-advised efforts to enforce them immediately played into the hands of the ambitious Gonzalo Pizarro. In the 1540s *encomiendas* provided the economic base of the conquistadors and first settlers. Men who had survived the wars of conquest and civil conflicts of Peru's early years would not voluntarily surrender their hard-won wealth and social eminence. Núñez Vela's ill-conceived efforts convinced the *encomenderos* that revolt might be necessary to preserve their power. Slowly, an armed opposition to the viceroy formed around Gonzalo Pizarro. The climax was reached when Núñez Vela stabbed to death a royal official whom he suspected of disloyalty.

The *audiencia*, or high court of Lima, arrested Núñez Vela in 1544, but he escaped and tried to organize an army in Quito. The rebel forces quickly hunted him down and killed him. Following the viceroy's execution in 1546, Gonzalo Pizarro became the effective ruler of Peru. Rejecting advice to declare independence from Spain, he unleashed a reign of terror against Spaniards suspected of disloyalty. During his brief rule he executed 340, many more Spaniards than had died during the conquest of the mighty Inka Empire.

Gonzalo Pizarro's brutality and the patent illegality of his authority worked predictably to provoke another armed conflict. When a new representative of royal authority, the priest Pedro de la Gasca, arrived, Gonzalo's military support melted away. By the time royalist forces cornered his army on the plain in front of Cuzco in 1549, there was no longer a will to fight. Without a test of strength, his Spanish supporters simply crossed the plain to join the royalists and accept pardons. Gonzalo Pizarro was arrested, tried for treason, and beheaded.

Pedro de la Gasca thus succeeded politically where the violent men of the conquest had failed. Although there continued to be brief challenges to royal authority in the 1550s, he ended an era of civil war that had repeatedly endangered Spanish control of Peru. Soon the colony moved dramatically away from the direct expropriation of Indian wealth through the *encomienda*. The discovery of vast silver deposits at Potosí in 1545 and mercury at Huancavelica in 1563 made possible by the 1570s the creation of the mining industry that long dominated the Peruvian economy.

The much-diminished Inka kingdom in Vilcabamba that Manco Inka had established after his flight from Cuzco survived his murder and the rule of two successors. Viceroy Francisco de Toledo, however, finally overwhelmed the last Sapa Inka, Tupac Amaru, by military force in 1572. After a trial, the last independent Inka ruler was beheaded in the central square of the ancient Inka capital.



In 1572 Tupac Amaru, the last leader of the independent Inka kingdom of Vilcabamba, was captured, taken to Cuzco, and executed.

His death, witnessed by thousands of Spaniards and a vast throng of native Andeans, ended the conquest saga begun forty years earlier at Cajamarca.

With the conquest of the Inka, the Spaniards gained dominion over a populous and wealthy region extending from Colombia to Chile. The ransom of Atahualpa and the riches subsequently seized in Cuzco far exceeded the precious metals that Cortés and his men had secured in Mexico. The number of immediate beneficiaries in both conquests, however, soon paled in comparison with the thousands of Spaniards who arrived in their wake. Eager to emulate the early conquistadors, these later arrivals joined expeditions that in a few years had combed much of the Western Hemisphere in a vain search for other wealthy native civilizations.

THE EBB TIDE OF CONQUEST

The Spanish and Portuguese exploration and occupation of Latin America did not follow a plan devised by European monarchs. Rather, individual ambition and the desire for personal wealth, as well as family fame and fortune, propelled this unprecedented territorial expansion. The military forces that collectively destroyed the autonomous polities of the Aztec and Inka and overwhelmed innumerable smaller native cultures were typically recruited and financed in the Americas and led by men with years of local experience. In these cases leaders organized expeditions and determined objectives in response to rumors of riches or to prior contacts with native peoples. In early years as conquests spread from the Caribbean to the American mainland, funds, manpower, and leadership expended in new explorations dangerously reduced the scarce human and material resources of existing settlements.

A handful of large, well-funded expeditions sailed directly from Spain, but, in general, small forces of hundreds of lightly armed Europeans organized in the New World and often augmented by native allies destroyed native indigenous autonomy and established new colonial orders. Because most expeditions had few men and limited resources, their success, and even survival, often depended on the ability and determination of individual leaders. The conquistadors cannot be reduced to a type, but clearly endurance, physical courage, audacity, and cunning, rather than high birth or formal military training, were among the important characteristics of the leaders of this era. Only prior experience in campaigns against the Indians consistently paid dividends.

In addition to the challenges posed by geography and climate and the nearly constant threats of hunger, thirst, and illness, the conquistadors confronted vast populations often understandably hostile at the invasion of their lands. Their weakness and vulnerability in an environment of nearly constant danger increased the likelihood that both the Spanish and Portuguese would seize on exemplary violence as a useful political tool for subordinating native peoples. The calculated use of brutality and cruelty would endure as a tool to control indigenous and enslaved peoples beyond the centuries of Spanish rule.

Central America

After the destruction of Tenochtitlan, Cortés organized new expeditions commanded by his most trusted lieutenants. Together they subjugated former tributaries of the Aztec confederation and followed up reports of rich civilizations elsewhere. Cortés himself led a small expedition to impose Spanish rule on Pánuco, located on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. The arrival of an undisciplined military force sent by the governor of Jamaica, however, soon undid Cortés's pacification of this region. The newcomers' greed and cruelty provoked a violent Indian uprising. The veterans Pedro de Alvarado and Gonzalo de Sandoval subdued the recently arrived Spaniards and then mercilessly crushed the native rebellion. The two groups of rebels received strikingly different treatment. Alvarado and Sandoval

forgave the Spanish intruders who had caused the uprising but burned to death 400 captured Indians.

Looking southward, Cortés ordered another veteran, Cristóbal de Olid, to explore the coast of modern Honduras to follow up rumors of rich kingdoms. Once on his own, Olid imitated Cortés's own actions at Vera Cruz, declaring himself governor. When news of this mutiny reached Cortés, he organized a punitive expedition and left for Central America in 1524. To forestall an uprising in Mexico, he took the defeated Aztec ruler Cuauhtemoc along as a hostage. Struggling through nearly impassable terrain and facing insubordination by his followers, Cortés agreed to execute Cuauhtemoc on the unreliable testimony of a native nobleman. Remembered largely for this unjustified cruelty, Cortés's failed expedition established neither Spanish authority nor permanent settlement. It did, however, initiate the conquest of Central America.

The key effort was led by Pedro de Alvarado whose slaughter of participants in a religious ritual ignited the Aztec uprising that had led to La Noche Triste. In hard fighting, Alvarado's men defeated the Quiche of Guatemala. Although materially poorer and militarily weaker than the Aztecs, the Quiche were formidable foes. With a population of 40,000, their capital of Uatlan impressed the veterans of the Aztec campaign. Built from cut stone and well-fortified, the city nonetheless proved unable to resist the determined Spanish attack. In Central America, as in the Valley of Mexico, the conquistadors exploited bitter tribal rivalries that divided the indigenous peoples. The Quiche's traditional enemies, the Cakchiquel, remained on the sidelines watching Alvarado destroy their rival's capital. Their turn came next.

The guerrilla tactics and determined resistance of the Cakchiquel so angered Alvarado that he ordered the captured chiefs burned to death. As the resistance crumbled, the Spanish branded and sold as slaves thousands of captured Quiche and Cakchiquel. The king's treasury received one fifth the value of all slaves sold. This merciless exploitation provoked popular uprisings in 1524 and 1526. The Spaniards suppressed these insurrections cruelly, taking a new harvest of native slaves.

The Maya of Yucatan resisted Spanish domination for more than a decade. Because the Maya were not organized in a unified political state, they proved more resistant to Spanish conquest. In Yucatan the Spaniards faced the difficult task of imposing centralized government on a divided and contentious people. Francisco de Montejo undertook their conquest in 1527, but as late as 1535 the Spanish found themselves able to control little more than the ground they stood upon. The effectiveness of Maya hit-and-run tactics slowed, but could not stop, the imposition of Spanish authority. Effective political control was only imposed in 1545, and the last independent Maya group was finally defeated in 1697.

The Northern Frontier

Perhaps surprisingly native peoples with decentralized political structures, a limited dependence on settled agriculture, and little urbanization proved more

successful in resisting Spanish and Portuguese advances than the more developed and powerful native states of the Aztec and Inka. This limited, often short-term, success came from employing guerrilla tactics that neutralized the advantages of superior European armaments. On the northern frontier of New Spain, for example, these tactics slowed pacification for decades. Between 1529 and 1536, Cortés's political rival and enemy, Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán, president of the first Audiencia of Mexico, carved out the new province of New Galicia north and west of Mexico City. But, beginning with an uprising called the Mixton War of 1540–42, the native peoples of this province and neighboring Zacatecas fiercely rose up and resisted the Spanish for more than a decade.

Spanish interest in New Galicia increased dramatically when native informants led a small group of missionaries and soldiers to a rich silver deposit in 1546. Within four years, thirty-four mines were operating. The native population, often referred to collectively as the Chichimeca, however, struggled desperately to hold back this flow of Europeans, just as their ancestors had previously resisted Toltec and Aztec domination. In the end, it took a combination of mission settlements peopled by pacified Indians relocated from the south, the construction and garrisoning of frontier forts (*presidios*), and utilization of an extensive system of bribes paid to the unpacified Chichimeca leaders to establish peace fifty years later in the 1590s.

Exploration of the far northern frontier began in 1540. The reports of Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, who with four other men had survived an incredible eight-year odyssey walking from the Gulf coast of Texas to Mexico, seemed to confirm native tales of great civilizations located in the north. Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza selected his well-born favorite, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, to lead more than 200 horsemen, 60 infantry, and over 1,000 Indian warriors to the far north. Passing through Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, Coronado failed to fulfill the expectations that had launched the expedition. Nonetheless, his effort initiated the systematic exploration of the American Southwest and brought the settled agriculturalists of the region, primarily Pueblo peoples, into the Spanish orbit.

Chile and the Pampean Region

The vast, sparsely settled Pampean region contained a variety of indigenous peoples dispersed in small groups. These mobile cultures were based on hunting and limited agriculture. Native families lived in temporary settlements that were moved to follow game or harvest edible plants. This physical dispersal and the absence of integrated political systems proved to be assets when the Spaniards invaded.

Pedro de Valdivia received the governorship of Chile as a reward for his loyalty to Francisco Pizarro in Peru's civil wars. Once arrived in Chile, Valdivia founded Santiago in 1541, but the settlement's very survival was put in doubt by the hostility of the indigenous population. An Indian attack while Valdivia was away nearly overwhelmed the settlers. Faced with this determined resistance, the Spanish embraced the practice of terrorizing the natives through violence, in one

case beheading seven hostage *caciques* and throwing them among an attacking force to break its will to fight.

The discovery of gold in 1552 attracted more than a thousand colonists to Chile, leading to the establishment of settlements along the southern frontier. Fertile soil and a temperate climate contributed to the rapid expansion of Spanish agriculture and ranching in the region as well. All this new mining and agricultural activity depended on the forced labor of the indigenous population, especially the Mapuches.

Yet, this period of expansion masked Chile's continued military vulnerability. Harsh exploitation by *encomenderos* soon embittered the pacified natives of the central valley while to the south a large unconquered population with an increasingly effective military capacity staged raids into Spanish territory.

Everywhere in the Americas native peoples strove to react to Spanish battlefield advantages, especially to mobility and speed of cavalry and the long-distance menace of firearms. During the siege of Tenochtitlan, Aztecs dug pits to trap mounted Spaniards, for example, and in Peru the Inka leader Manco even learned to ride captured horses and use Spanish weapons, but none of these adaptations stemmed the tide of conquest. In Chile in the 1550s, however, the pace of native military adaptation finally overtook the Spanish military capacities, forcing the invaders to accept a long stalemate on this frontier. The agent of this rebalancing of power was the Mapuche *Toqui* (war leader), Lautaro.

Captured as an eleven-year-old by the Spanish, Lautaro was forced into personal service by Pedro de Valdivia. Working in Spanish stables and accompanying Valdivia on military campaigns, he learned equestrian skills and became familiar with Spanish tactics and weapons. He also developed a deep hatred for the Spaniards, witnessing the innumerable cruelties used to break Mapuche resistance. He escaped captivity in 1553, fled to his people, and quickly trained an army to resist the next Spanish incursion.

Lautaro divided his force into divisions to keep constant pressure on the Spanish horsemen and carefully chose his defensive positions on soft ground that would tire the horses. Brilliantly employing his strategy, he defeated the Spaniards at Tucapel, capturing, torturing, and executing Valdivia. The Mapuche pressed their advantage, but the death in battle of Lautaro, the terrible effects of epidemic diseases, and the arrival of an army from Peru finally blunted their military advances. Nevertheless, they maintained their political autonomy and cultural independence well past the end of the Spanish colonial era in South America.

Spanish exploration of the Río de la Plata region began with Juan de Solís in 1516. Ten years later Sebastian Cabot began a remarkable three-year investigation of the estuary and inland river system without creating a permanent settlement. Fearful of the growing Portuguese presence along the Brazilian coast, the Spanish Crown organized one of the largest European military forces ever sent directly to the New World in 1536. The expedition's leader, Pedro de Mendoza, established a settlement on the south bank of the river and was at first welcomed by the native population. Violence broke out, however, when Spanish demands for food and

labor outstripped the natives' hospitality. Facing a cycle of native raids, Mendoza abandoned the settlement, embarked most of the survivors, and sailed for Spain; he died during the voyage.

Even as Mendoza prepared to sail, an expedition led by two lieutenants explored the interior, leading to the founding of Asunción, Paraguay, by Domingo Martínez de Irala. Located near a large population of sedentary agriculturalists, the Guaraní, the Spanish developed an *encomienda*-based economy similar to those of Mexico and Peru. In 1541 the remaining Spanish population of Buenos Aires relocated to Asunción. Then, in 1580 Juan de Garay reestablished the city of Buenos Aires transplanting settlers recruited in Asunción.

Northern South America

Early coastal reconnaissance and exploration of the northern South American mainland by the Spanish followed in the wake of slave raids on native populations. As late as 1530 only a handful of permanent settlements existed between the mouth of the Orinoco River in modern Venezuela and the Isthmus of Panama. This comparative isolation ended when in 1530 Diego de Ordas, one of Cortés's captains, used his influence at court to gain a license to explore the Orinoco basin. Like many of his contemporaries, Ordas believed that gold "grew" better near the equator. With more than 600 Spaniards, he sailed up the Orinoco only to have to endure nearly constant battle and incredible privation. His force broken, the unfortunate Ordas gave up, dying during his voyage home.

The pace of exploration increased dramatically when the heavily indebted Charles I of Spain granted the exploration of Venezuela to one of his many creditors, the German banking house of Welser. Governor Ambrosius Dalfinger led the first expedition into the interior in 1529. His second in command, Nicolaus Federmann, followed with another march into the interior in 1530. Dalfinger's expedition penetrated the eastern flank of the mountains and saw for the first time beautifully finished gold ornaments that the forest Indians indicated had come from the Muisca (Chibchas). Most of the gold that Dalfinger collected disappeared when the men escorting it to the coast became lost and perished. Dalfinger himself later died in a second expedition into the interior after being wounded by a poisoned arrow.

The end for the Muisca, the last high civilization conquered by the Spanish, came quickly once the Andes was penetrated. Ultimately, three separate expeditions entered their territory, but the glory and most of the treasure fell into the hands of the lawyer Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada. Selected to lead the expedition by the governor of Santa Marta on the Colombian coast, Quesada began with more than 500 Spaniards, but by the time he reached the Muisca realm, only 170 men had survived.

Approximately 1 million Muisca were organized in an integrated and well-ordered village system near the modern city of Bogotá. They were structured in two large political confederations headed by rival rulers, the *zipa* of Bogotá and the *zaque* of Tunja. The Muisca were politically and technologically less advanced

than were the Aztec and Inka. They had no large cities and used tools and weapons made of stone or wood. Their production of beautiful gold work proved irresistible to the Spanish.

In March 1537, Quesada's men entered the broad valleys and prosperous villages of the Muisca domain. The Muisca struck first in a surprise attack, but the Spanish cavalry quickly turned the battle into a bloody rout. Quesada's men swiftly captured the Muisca leader, the *zaque* of Tunja, seizing 135,500 pesos of fine gold, 14,000 pesos of base gold, and 280 emeralds. Under torture other native chiefs led the Spaniards to tombs that provided additional booty. With the death of the *zipa* of Bogotá, Quesada selected a new ruler who foolishly offered to duplicate Atahualpa's ransom to escape further torment. Because he failed to deliver the promised treasure, the Spaniards applied fire to his feet, causing him to die in great agony. When the booty was divided in June 1538, the governor of Santa Marta received ten shares; Quesada, nine; the other captains, four; each cavalryman, two; and each soldier, one. Each share was calculated at 510 pesos of fine gold, 57 pesos of base gold, and 5 emeralds, a treasure larger than that won by Cortés in Mexico but smaller than Pizarro's windfall in Peru.

Brazil

The Portuguese occupation of Brazil shared many characteristics with the Spanish experience in the Río de la Plata region. Brazil had no wealthy, urbanized native civilizations. The early exploration and settlement of this vast colony, therefore, lacked the great drama of Cortés's conquest of the Aztec or Pizarro's triumph in Peru. There were approximately 2.4 million Indians divided among scores of non-sedentary and semisedentary cultures. Along the coast where the first contacts were made, the Portuguese encountered many large settlements. Language differences and a tradition of armed conflict often permitted the Portuguese to establish native alliances and gain a foothold.

Following Cabral's landing in 1500, initial contacts between Indians and the Portuguese were limited in number and generally peaceful. Portugal chose to commit its scarce manpower and resources to the exploitation of the Far East, given the high prices paid for that region's spices and silks. In contrast, the only Brazilian product that found a ready market in Europe was a red dyewood, brazilwood. Initially, the exploitation of this forest product did not provoke armed confrontations. Portuguese would anchor along the coast and trade iron tools, weapons, and other European goods to the natives who organized the harvest and transportation of brazilwood to the waiting ships.

At first natives eagerly participated in this commerce. But the establishment of a rival French settlement in what is now Rio de Janeiro led to competition for dyewood and placed unacceptable pressure on the indigenous population, undermining the early barter economy. As a result, both groups of European invaders sought military allies among the native peoples and turned to forced labor to continue the profitable collection of brazilwood. This heightened already-existing native rivalries and led inevitably to the enslavement of native captives.

The creation of more permanent settlements and the introduction of sugar cultivation led to a rapid increase of native slaves. Sugar was produced in Pernambuco in 1526 and then expanded into São Vicente and Espírito Santo in the 1530s. Nearly constant war among indigenous peoples provided the invaders with a ready opportunity to organize the supply of slaves. Before the arrival of Europeans, natives had slain their enemies on the battlefield and kept few captives. Now the labor needs of expanding European agriculture transformed these practices by turning these captives into commodities. Divided by ancient rivalries, the Indians were unable to unite and resist European settlement. At the same time, some Tupi-speaking Portuguese settlers forged alliances with local elites by marrying native women in indigenous rites or, alternately, living with them in concubinage. Their *mameluco* (mixed race) children, especially in Bahia and São Paulo, later created a political and cultural bridge between temporarily independent indigenous cultures and their future subordination in the context of a colonial society. In isolated areas many *mamelucos* served important political and military leaders.

By the time that some indigenous groups tried to overthrow the encroaching colonial order in the 1550s, the European population, reinforced by *mameluco* kinsmen and a Crown finally willing to commit resources to Brazil, proved too strong. The natives had their victories, including killing the colony's first bishop and nearly destroying the Portuguese settlements of Ilhéus, Espírito Santo, and Salvador, but the action of Governor-General Mem de Sá (1558–72) turned the tide. Horses, firearms, and metal weapons and armor provided an advantage that no amount of native heroism or military competence could overcome. By the end of the sixteenth century nearly all the coast between Rio Grande and São Vicente had been pacified. Although the French established a colony known as France Antarctique near present-day Rio de Janeiro in 1555, Governor-General Mem de Sá captured their island fortress in 1560, eliminating resistance by French settlers and their native allies. By the late sixteenth century, explorers reached what became the effective territorial limits of Spain's and Portugal's American empires. The conquerors had defeated militarily or subordinated nearly all the region's native peoples under colonial rule. They had accomplished this enormous undertaking, moreover, with few resources and little government control. As each region fell to conquest and settlement, the Iberian Crowns turned to the task of imposing order and elaborating the institutions of government, Church, and economy.

BLACK PARTICIPATION IN THE AGE OF CONQUEST

Many black slaves and nearly all the free blacks who participated in the conquest and early settlement of Spanish America were males who had been born in or had lived many years in Spain or Portugal. Whether slave or free, the majority spoke Spanish or Portuguese, were baptized Christians, and generally operated within the culture and technology of Europe. Spanish settlers and royal officials in the New World soon requested special licenses to introduce slaves directly from

Africa. The Spanish Crown's positive response led to a rising tide of imports. In contrast, Portugal had a well-established trade with Africa and was a major participant in the slave trade prior to the exploration and settlement of Brazil. As a result, African-born slaves helped define the character of colonial Brazil from the earliest years. Although racially distinct and retaining some elements of African cultural practice, these free blacks and slaves joined Spanish and Portuguese settlers in imposing Europe's political and cultural domination over defeated indigenous peoples.

It was common for black free men and slaves to participate in Spanish conquests in the sixteenth century. A free black served as second in command of Pizarro's artillery at Cajamarca, eventually gaining the rank of captain among these conquistadors, but the majority of black conquistadors were slaves accompanying their masters. Present in nearly all the campaigns of the Caribbean Basin, they were especially important in the conquests of Puerto Rico in 1508 and Cuba in 1511. Because of these auxiliaries' importance, conquistadors who brought their slaves commonly claimed extra shares of an expedition's spoils. The wealth gained in the conquest of Mexico allowed some conquistadors to purchase newly imported black slaves to employ in succeeding expeditions. For example, Pedro de Alvarado's expeditions to Central America and Peru included large numbers of slaves. An important presence in Panama by the 1520s, black slaves accompanied Pizarro and Almagro during their destruction of the Inka Empire. Pizarro was so aware of the importance of black manpower and skill that he secured permission to import fifty slaves to Peru as part of his preconquest agreement with the Spanish Crown. By the end of the 1540s, thousands of African slaves resided in the Andean region.

The military struggles of the conquest period provided many slaves with opportunities to gain their freedom. Eager commanders struggling to find manpower for their expeditions rarely asked black men for proof of their legal status. As a result scores of slaves escaped bondage by fleeing their masters and locating to new regions; a smaller number joined indigenous communities as runaways. Most commonly, male slaves gained their freedom through their actions on the battlefield.

Juan Garrido had arrived in the Caribbean region in 1502 or 1503, participated in the conquests of Puerto Rico and Cuba, and fought alongside Cortés in Mexico. Toward the end of his life, he wrote to the king asking for recognition and rewards for his actions: "I served Your Majesty in the conquest and pacification of this New Spain, from the time the Marqués del Valle [Cortés] entered it; and in his company I was present at all the invasions and conquests and pacifications which were carried out . . . all of which I did at my own expense" and without receiving either pay or even a modest assignment of Indians in return. He then claimed to have been "the first to have the inspiration to sow [wheat] here in New Spain."⁶

Many of the most notable and influential of these black conquistadors fought in frontier regions where nearly constant warfare provided numerous opportunities to be singled out for rewards. Juan Valiente was a prominent member of Diego

de Almagro's ill-fated Chilean expedition, a force that had included many blacks. Later returning to Chile with the conquistador Pedro de Valdivia, Valiente's heroism won him a substantial estate and one of the five *encomiendas* granted to blacks from Valdivia's force. A runaway slave from Mexico, Valiente—like many of his Spanish contemporaries—had overcome the liability of his bondage and achieved a better life in the Indies. Juan Beltrán, the son of a black man and an Indian woman, also became a stalwart defender of Chile's southern frontier and rose to garrison commander and *encomendero*.

Indians recognized the strong association of blacks with Spanish power, sometimes characterizing them as “black white men.” With the establishment of Spanish and Portuguese colonial administration and, especially, with the development of the African slave trade, black judicial and social inferiority was institutionalized. The social fluidity of the conquest era gave way to a colonial social order that presumed black inferiority. Nevertheless, some Spanish and Portuguese owners used their black slaves to supervise the labor and collection of tribute from free Indian populations. Other blacks trained as artisans directed Indian draft labor for large-scale public and religious construction projects, and some helped introduce European agriculture, especially the highly specialized production of sugar and wine.

CONUNDRUMS AND THE COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE

The exploration, conquest, and settlement of the New World forced intellectuals to confront profound issues of interpretation and meaning as well as presenting navigators, merchants, and agriculturalists with numerous practical problems to solve. The Iberians' right to conquer and settle the New World, the very nature of the Amerindians and the treatment they should receive from the victors, and the justification and methods of Christian conversion were topics widely debated by European jurists and theologians. On a more prosaic level, the addition of the Western Hemisphere to the Old World's geographic knowledge would necessitate redrawing maps, improving navigational tools, mastering new languages, and identifying and exploiting new commercial opportunities.

Cosmography (science that studies earth and the universe) was transformed by the exploration of the Americas. Whereas Columbus died convinced he had reached Asia, other explorers presented evidence that he had encountered a “new world,” a territory unknown to the ancients and separate from the “Island of Earth”—the land mass comprising Europe, Asia, Africa, and adjacent islands—that fifteenth-century thinkers had considered the only place in the universe where humans could live.

In 1507 a map by Martin Waldseemüller provided the representation of an independent continent he labeled “America” in honor of the Florentine navigator Amerigo Vespucci. After the first circumnavigation of the globe, in the late 1520s mapmakers were able to present a more accurate outline of the Pacific Ocean and

the west coast of the Americas. Gerardus Mercator's map in 1569 ended dependence on the ancients, notably Ptolemy, and opened a new era for cartography. Better detail of the coasts and interiors of the continents followed later coasting expeditions and explorations.

Even as exploration revealed a separate hemisphere disconnected from the known world of 1491, questions about the nature of its inhabitants began to attract attention. Reports of early explorers made clear that the natives' appearance and behavior differed from those of Europeans. Their nudity, for example, immediately caught the Iberians' attention. Columbus related in a letter published more than twenty times by 1500 that with rare exceptions the people of the islands went about unclad. The chronicler of Cabral's landfall in Brazil was particularly enchanted by the women who were "just as naked [as the men and] . . . not displeasing to the eye."⁷ Even if these comments appear merely prudish today, other observations served to justify how indigenous peoples would be treated by their new imperial masters. Among the other reported customs that Europeans found astonishing were the allegations published in the chronicles of explorers and settlers of widespread cannibalism in Brazil, the Caribbean islands, and on the Spanish Main. Reports of human sacrifices and cannibalism later reported by Bernal Diaz and others in central Mexico served to confirm what many Europeans presumed to be the inherent inferiority of the Amerindians. Some asked whether they were fully human. Negative representations on issues like these were quickly adjusted to justify conquest and colonial rule, the seizure of native wealth, and widespread demands for native laborers during succeeding decades. Others asserted that the native peoples of the Americas were simple, beautiful, innocent people living according to their instincts. Some even concluded that these innocents, although ignorant of the teachings of the Christian church, were more Christ-like in their practices than the greedy, selfish Europeans who abused them.

The papal donation of 1493 gave the Crown of Castile title to the Indies and provided a justification for war against the natives, but as exploration and conquest revealed the complexity and ambiguities of both indigenous cultures and European practices, these assumptions and justifications were sharply debated. According to one school of medieval thought, a Christian ruler serving the pope could legitimately declare war on infidels who refused to acknowledge papal authority, but were the native peoples of the Americas infidels? Had they received Christian teaching and then rejected it, like Muslims? As Spanish critics explored this far-reaching claim, both clerical and secular opinion moved away from seeing the natives of the Americas as infidels whose enslavement was justified.

The Spanish Dominican Francisco de Vitoria, one of the founders of international law, outlined in the 1530s other reasons justifying Spanish conquest and rule. Although Vitoria opposed war for war's sake, he considered it just if the natives prevented Spaniards from living among them in peace, opposed the preaching of the Christian gospel, or tried to force Christian converts to revert to idolatry. He also claimed that Spaniards were obligated to save innocent people from cannibalism or other "unjust death" as well as to aid their native allies. A contemporary,

the eminent humanist and translator of Aristotle, Dr. Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, was more direct. Employing Aristotle's theory of natural slavery, Sepúlveda argued that the natives' natural inferiority, idolatries, and other sins justified the use of war to civilize them. For Sepúlveda, the inherent barbarity of native cultures in the Americas vindicated the Spanish conquest and the enslavement of indigenous peoples. He further justified the efficacy of violence because it facilitated conversion to Christianity. In 1537 Pope Paul III stated the Catholic Church's official position on the natives' nature. His bull *Sublimis Deus* declared the peoples of the New World were "truly men" with immortal souls and thus capable of Christianization. More important, the bull prohibited the enslavement of natives and the seizure of their property. But this high-minded pronouncement failed to terminate Indian slavery in either Spanish America or Brazil. There was simply much too much money to be made from the forced labor of natives.

A broader debate took place in Spain over the conquest and forced conversion of the natives. The principal protagonists were Sepúlveda and the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas. A former conquistador and *encomendero*, Las Casas's denunciations of the Spanish mistreatment of Indians had influenced the Crown's decision to promulgate the New Laws of 1542 that led to Gonzalo Pizarro's rebellion in Peru. A vehement opponent of conquest and forced conversion, he maintained that the natives had sufficient "capacity" to become Christianized peacefully and live like Spaniards. Sepúlveda, on the other hand, relied on the papal donation and Aristotle's doctrine of natural slavery to justify both Spain's conquest and the use of forceful conversion. The consequence, he argued, was to end barbarous customs such as idolatry, cannibalism, and human sacrifice.

In 1550 Charles I entered the controversy. He convened a panel of theologians and jurists in Valladolid to resolve the debate and ordered an end to armed conquest until the issue was settled. To the dismay of the combatants, no resolution followed, although his son, Philip II, issued an ordinance in 1573 that employed the term "pacification" rather than "conquest" in projecting Spanish settlement of the Philippine Islands. Despite the king's intention, much of the American continent had already been transformed by violent conquest, and, even in the Philippines, brute force continued to be the foundation of colonial rule. The most important long-term consequence of the controversy was the use that Spain's enemies made of some of its assertions. The English, Dutch, and other European rivals gleefully seized upon Las Casas's allegations of the conquistadors' cruelty, elaborating the so-called Black Legend to undermine Spanish claims to the Americas. So effective was this propaganda campaign that a continuous thread of anti-Hispanic prejudice can be traced to the present day in the English-speaking world.

Disease

Diseases joined plants and animals in the passage back and forth across the Atlantic. Millennia of isolation had prevented America's indigenous peoples from developing immunities against a series of devastating diseases that arrived from Europe and Africa following initial contacts. Smallpox reached Española by the

fall of 1518 and was carried to New Spain in 1520 where it facilitated the victory of Cortés. The disease then moved through Central America and, according to some scholars, entered Peru no later than 1527. Wherever it passed, the epidemic facilitated the Spanish conquest, as it left an astronomical death toll in its wake. Frequently villages lost half or more of their population; some reports put losses as high as 90 percent.

Measles struck Mexico and the Andes in 1531–33. An epidemic that was probably typhus arrived fifteen years later. A virulent form of influenza followed, after killing perhaps 20 percent of the population in parts of Europe. Yellow fever and malaria came from Africa in the mid-seventeenth century. These and other diseases, which included diphtheria and possibly bubonic plague, further afflicted already-weakened native populations. By the mid-seventeenth century, the native population of Spanish America had fallen to a small fraction—probably less than 10 percent and perhaps not even 5 percent—of its size in 1500.

While the timing of early epidemics was different in Brazil, the pattern of destruction and death was similar. The first wave of epidemics struck near Salvador in 1562 and then penetrated a wider area the following year. Probably a variety of hemorrhagic dysentery was the biggest killer. A contemporary described its painful course: "The disease began with serious pains inside the intestines which made the liver and the lungs rot. It then turned into pox that were so rotten and poisonous that the flesh fell off them in pieces full of evil-smelling beasties."⁸ Perhaps one third to one half of the native population perished in this initial onslaught. Another wave of diseases, including smallpox and measles, then killed thousands in northeastern Brazil in the 1620s. By 1800 the native population of Brazil was probably no more than a quarter of its size in 1500.

It was once believed that syphilis had an American origin, showing that, while the consequences of new diseases were far more calamitous in the New World than in the Old, diseases traveled in both directions. Sources suggest that some of the men with Columbus on his first voyage returned to Barcelona with symptoms of sexually transmitted disease. There was certainly a subsequent major outbreak among Spanish soldiers serving in Italy. The disease then spread through Italian and French military forces in 1495. However, we now know that a form of syphilis was present in Europe long before the first voyage of Columbus. The virulence of the outbreak at the end of the fifteenth century, though, does suggest that a different version of the disease was encountered in the Americas after 1492.

Whatever the qualms raised about the justice and legitimacy of the Iberian presence in the Western Hemisphere, it was clear in the Caribbean from the time of Ovando and in Brazil from the 1530s that the invaders were going to stay. Although these outsiders introduced plants, animals, and tools that in many cases were adapted to local needs by native peoples, Europeans also brought a variety of epidemic diseases to which the Amerindians had no immunity. Those Iberians who returned to the peninsula carried with them New World plants, animals, and native diseases. Over time this "Columbian exchange" indelibly altered the demographic and economic landscapes of both the Old World and the New.

The Diffusion of Plants and Animals

Decades before the conquests of the Aztec and Inka empires, early contacts between Europeans and the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean Basin had initiated an exchange of domesticated plants and animals that would eventually influence agriculture and diet globally. European explorers, military adventurers, colonial administrators, and settlers eventually introduced all the staples of southern European agriculture—notably wheat, olives, grapes, fruits, and garden vegetables—to the Americas soon after contact. The key expectation, an expectation mostly realized, was to recreate in the Americas the traditional diet enjoyed by European settlers before their emigration.

As the Spanish and Portuguese spread their settlements to the continental mainland in the sixteenth century, they supplemented European staples by introducing numerous African and Asian crops such as rice, bananas, coconuts, breadfruit, coffee, and sugar. While settlers added some of these cultigens to their diets, many became important cash crops marketed through the proliferating commercial links that tied American colonies and peoples to the markets of Europe, Africa, and Asia. The most influential of these agricultural commodities was sugar, the agricultural product that came to dominate the colonial economies of the Caribbean and Brazil to the end of the nineteenth century.

Even as production of these transplanted crops expanded rapidly, consumption remained culturally circumscribed. The white and mixed-race populations of colonial cities comprised the major market for European crops successfully adapted to American environments. Their counterparts in small towns and mining camps also remained committed to European dietary norms. Indigenous communities, however, continued the dietary habits of the precontract era, consuming primarily maize, beans, squash and other indigenous cultigens, although some native families allied with colonial elites added wheat bread, wine, or olive oil to their diets. Other domesticated foodstuffs introduced after 1492 that found a place on the margins of traditional consumption included citrus fruits, melons, figs, onions, radishes, salad greens, and sugar. Over time the steep decline in indigenous population, the effects of the African slave trade, and the growing mixed-race population combined to move regional consumption away from precontract foods and toward the mix of European and, especially, African additions to Latin American cuisine.

In return the Americas offered the Old World an abundance of useful plants. Maize, potatoes, and manioc (cassava) revolutionized agriculture and diet across much of Europe, Africa, and Asia. In fact, many experts claim that the rapid growth of world population after 1700 resulted in large measure from the dissemination of these useful crops, which generally provided more calories per acre than did the Old World grains like wheat, barley, oats, and rye cultivated before 1492. Europeans also played a key role in spreading the consumption of highly nutritional sweet potatoes from the Americas to wide areas of Africa and Asia. Domesticated in both Mesoamerican and the Andes, sweet potatoes were first spread to Oceania by Polynesian voyaging canoes centuries before Columbus but became

a world staple via European imperialism. In addition to this potent array of useful and nutritious crops, beans, squash, tomatoes, peanuts, chilies, and chocolate also gained widespread acceptance once introduced in the Old World. Beyond these substantial contributions, the New World provided the Old World with numerous useful plants that provided dyes, like cochineal; medicine, like quinine; and useful varieties of cotton. It also provided the world with tobacco, initially, and incorrectly, believed to have medicinal qualities.

Weeds also accompanied Europeans to the Americas. Thistles and nettles were but two weeds that Iberians almost certainly introduced unintentionally. In the pampas of the future Argentina, the Mediterranean giant thistle reached the height of a mounted horseman. In Peru turnips and mint plagued cultivated fields. Clover also proved an intractable competitor against crops in the Andes. Taking root quickly in soil disturbed by travel, construction, and mining, these weeds often fed the livestock Iberians also brought with them.

The introduction of European livestock affected New World environments dramatically. Compared with the mixed results of early horticulture in the Antilles, the initial introduction of livestock produced spectacular results. Horses, cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, and chickens reached Española in 1493. Indigenous population losses due to mistreatment, the disruption of native agriculture, and disease opened space where imported livestock flourished and encroached on native agriculture, further exacerbating the drop in native population. As the Spaniards advanced from one island to another, they routinely took domestic animals with them. The Spaniards' ability to travel with a mobile food supply, most notably swine, facilitated their subsequent exploration and conquest beyond the Caribbean.

Faced with few large natural predators in their new surroundings, cattle, pigs, horses, and sheep spread rapidly across American landscapes, especially once European settlers reached the mainland. On the vast plains of southern Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina, for example, herds of wild cattle and horses came to exceed 50 million by 1700. In addition to these domesticated animals so crucial to the European advance, pests like rats and rabbits entered the Americas and multiplied rapidly.

Where Old World livestock spread most rapidly, environmental changes were dramatic. Many priests and colonial officials noted the destructive impact of marauding livestock on Amerindian agriculturists. Indeed, the Spaniards' herds caused the natives no end of trouble as they trod through fields and villages, destroying crops. The exasperated first viceroy of Mexico, Antonio de Mendoza, wrote to the Spanish king in alarm, stating, "May your Lordship realize that if cattle are allowed, the Indians will be destroyed." Sheep, which grazed grasses close to the ground, also quickly posed an environmental threat. In arid regions, like north-central Mexico, intense grazing combined with periods of drought to promote desertification.

Yet the stark choice Mendoza presented to his monarch ultimately misrepresented the complex response of indigenous peoples to the introduction of these new animals. For example, the vast herds of feral cattle that developed on the plains of South America, northern Mexico, and Texas may have threatened some

indigenous agriculturalists but also provided indigenous peoples with abundant supplies of meat and hides. In the present-day southwestern United States, the Navajo became shearers and expert weavers. Even in the centers of European settlement, like the Andes and Mexico, Amerindians turned European animals to their own advantage by becoming muleteers, cowboys, and shearers. Cattle and sheep provided not only meat but also other products—hides, tallow, and wool—for market. Hides became an important, but second-tier, export from the colonies. As early as 1587, a Spanish fleet carried nearly 100,000 hides to Seville, most of them from New Spain.

No animal had a more striking effect on the cultures of native peoples than the horse, which had played such a key role in the conquest era. Within fifty years indigenous peoples began to learn the complex equine skills necessary for mastery. Once adapted to the horse, they enjoyed a dramatic increase in hunting efficiency and in the military capacity of warriors, especially on the plains of North and South America. The horse revolutionized the cultures of the Apache and Comanche of North America as well as the Mapuche and Pampas peoples in South America.

The introduction of new plants and animals to the Americas was transformative, affecting indigenous agriculture, diet, and social hierarchies. Oxen, horses, and mules, for example, made possible the adoption of the European plow. The predatory effects of grazing herds of feral cattle and horses on traditional indigenous agriculture pushed families away from independent, community-based ways of life and toward employment in economic sectors controlled by Europeans. Urban demand for wheat, wine, olive oil, and other products commercialized land previously exploited for subsistence, facilitating its transfer to settlers. Diets changed, work patterns were altered, and residency arrangements evolved to reflect a new colonial material order.

Ecological Changes

Millennia of native American agricultural activity and hunting had altered the landscapes of the New World long before the arrival of Europeans. The presence of cities, villages, religious sites, fortifications, raised fields, terraces, agricultural plots, roads, irrigation systems, deforestation, and substantial erosion in regions with dense native populations demonstrated that Europeans had not reached a pristine Garden of Eden.

The demographic catastrophe that native populations suffered with the arrival of Europeans profoundly affected the physical environment. With the total population of the Americas in 1650 reduced by at least 90 percent from its 1492 level, human exploitation and pressure on the American environment and its flora and fauna lessened considerably. Raised fields in Yucatan and Peru were abandoned, as were many terraced lands used for agriculture in Mexico and Peru. Turtle pens in the Amazon disappeared, along with flood farming on its banks. Birds previously killed for their feathers enjoyed a reprieve. The abandonment of dams on rivers reduced pressures on spawning fish. Although settler populations and newly introduced livestock placed pressure on some regions and at times ruined prosperous

agricultural land through overuse and lack of fertilizer, overall, Latin American forests in 1800 were more extensive than when the Iberians arrived.

The introduction of European draught animals like oxen and use of the European plow that enabled unprecedented extensive agriculture across the Americas also facilitated the spread of Old World weeds, promoting soil erosion on a previously unknown scale. The greatest changes, however, arose from the combination of human depopulation and introduction of Old World domesticated animals. With few predators and abundant grazing land, recently introduced livestock expanded their populations rapidly until, in some regions, they exceeded the carrying capacity of their food supply. Where this occurred, their populations then plummeted before slowly returning to a level that the overgrazed and impoverished plant base could sustain. This thirty-five- to forty-year process transformed the affected landscape as native plants unable to survive overgrazing disappeared while others that were distasteful or inedible to the animals replaced them.

Some of the most consequential changes occurred when grazing animals moved onto land previously devoted to agriculture. The case of the Valley of Mezquital north of the Valley of Mexico exemplifies the extent to which the introduction of sheep could alter the physical landscape in less than a century. When the Spaniards arrived, a dense native population grew corn, beans, squash, and other plants in spring-fed, irrigated fields in the southern portion of the Valley and maguey, mesquite, nopal cactus, and other plants in the dry portion. Trees covered the hills and wild animals were plentiful. A 90-percent decline in the native population opened the door to the transformation of the region from agriculture to grazing. Following the introduction of sheep, their numbers experienced a meteoric expansion from 34,000 in 1539 to almost 4.4 million in 1589. By the latter date, sheep had displaced the native population; mesquite and other desert plants covered the formerly fertile flatlands; deforestation had denuded the hills; many springs had dried out; the irrigation system was in ruins; and erosion scarred the piedmont. Overgrazing and the resultant environmental devastation brought a sudden drop in the number of sheep by 1599 to around 2.9 million. The poverty of the natives of this once-fertile region became renowned, and by the end of the seventeenth century the name Valley of Mezquital, or "place where mesquite grows," was attached to the once-flourishing agricultural region.

European livestock also affected the environment of the Andes. Here, too, grazing flocks of sheep trampled and in some cases destroyed once-productive fields and harmed hillside terraces constructed to facilitate agricultural production and retard erosion. Rope bridges common in the Inka period could not withstand the weight and hooves of livestock and fell into disrepair. Flocks damaged sloped surfaces that then suffered erosion during periods of heavy rainfall. Expanding pastures also contributed to the destruction of scarce woodlands, already depleted before the arrival of the Spaniards.

The Spaniards' view of stagnant water, as found in the lakes of the Valley of Mexico, initiated perhaps the greatest change in the American landscape. The Mexica found rich sustenance in the fish, birds, and other edibles they harvested

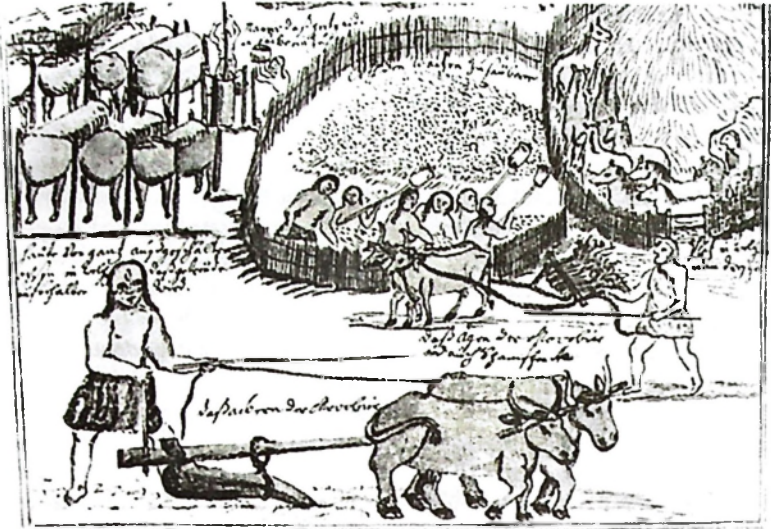
from the lakes. They also used these same waters for a highly effective transportation network, employing some 200,000 canoes. The Spaniards, on the other hand, hated the lakes with their salty water, considering them the source of various illnesses, including fevers, constipation, and dysentery. Above all, Spaniards considered the lakes to be the source of the floods that repeatedly damaged Mexico City starting in 1555, ignoring the effect of their efforts to fill in canals and thereby expand the number of building lots. After a major flood in 1607 that dissolved adobe houses at their base, the colonial government initiated a drainage project that gained momentum following another terrible flood in 1629. Work continued for the remainder of the colonial era and for most of the nineteenth century before completion. Its impact on the native population of the Valley was enormous. They suffered both forced labor drafts and the loss of important resources for food and trade.

The foundation of Spanish and Portuguese settlements further modified the American environment. The creation of new cities and towns where none had existed before—Puebla, Potosí, and Salvador (Bahia) among others, for example—not only transformed the urban land where buildings and roads were constructed but also transformed nearby lands to accommodate grazing animals and food production to sustain a growing urban population. Mining camps, including Potosí in Alto Peru, which reached a population of 120,000 by 1620, left the native landscape unrecognizable. Silver mining scarred the land's surface with pits, tunnels, processing plants, and tailings while promoting deforestation by using wood for fuel in smelting. The eventual substitution of mercury amalgamation for smelting had an even more devastating environmental impact as poisonous mercury tailings leached into soil and water sources. Also, of course, mercury poisoned the native workers forced to work in the refineries.

In contrast to the effort to eliminate the lakes of the Valley of Mexico, Spaniards in mining areas sought to harness water to drive the machinery for crushing ore. In the 1570s and 1580s, Spaniards oversaw the construction of a number of dams to provide hydraulic power to operate the refining mills of Potosí. By the early seventeenth century, some thirty dams powered over seventy mills.

Sugar plantations also adversely affected the natural environment. Portuguese planters in Brazil employed slash-and-burn techniques to open forest land to sugar planting. This profligate agricultural exploitation tended to reduce fertility to some ten to fifteen years before yields lost profitability, and planters had to cut and burn virgin land again, using slaves to begin the cycle anew. In processing sugar, they used large quantities of firewood. For the early Portuguese sugar planters, the enormous resources of land and wood seemed inexhaustible, and, therefore, they showed little interest in conserving either.

It is difficult to summarize the environmental consequences that resulted from the destruction of autonomous indigenous polities and first stages of Spanish and Portuguese colonization in the Americas, but some things are clear. Native peoples had intensely utilized the natural environment before the arrival of Europeans, in some cases altering the course of rivers and streams, constructing terraces and



The indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere found ways to benefit from the plants and animals introduced by Europeans. Here an Indian in traditional dress uses a plow pulled by oxen to prepare his field, while in the background other villagers use horses to thresh wheat. Oxen, horses, and wheat brought changes, but traditional culture persisted as well.

raised fields, and cutting down or burning forests. The terrible deprivations of the conquest period powerfully affected these practices. Not only did native populations suffer thousands of casualties and deaths from military violence, but much larger numbers fled from towns, villages, and farms as they sought to escape the fighting. The introduction of Old World diseases led to even more catastrophic population loss and displacement of native peoples.

As a result, the human landscapes of the region were transformed, some nearly emptied of population. Long-cultivated fields were abandoned, allowing forests to reappear, and difficult-to-maintain terraces, raised fields, and dams fell into disrepair. With the long-term balance between human populations and the natural environment in flux, the introduction of previously unknown grazing animals and new technologies like the axe and plow often led to environmental deprivations. More disruptive still, Europeans developed commercial links that connected the colonial products of Latin America to distant markets. The agendas of Iberians and their New World descendants eclipsed the subsistence needs of the indigenous populations in the use of land resources and other natural endowments.

By the end of the colonial period in the nineteenth century, the region's growing population was still much smaller than it had been in 1491. But this smaller population exploited the natural environment much more intensely than at any earlier period due to the introduction of new plants, animals, and technologies.

This more intense exploitation, in turn, depended on the elaboration of commercial linkages across vast geographic distances, tying the producers of the colonies to far-flung consumers. The chief results of these important changes to the relationship between human populations and the natural environment were the production of enormous wealth, much of it appropriated by the two Iberian imperial powers, and the introduction of new threats to the natural environment that still challenge Latin America today.

NOTES

1. Hernán Cortés, *Hernan Cortés: Letters from Mexico*, trans. and ed. A. R. Pagden (New York: Orion Press, 1971), p. 67.
2. Bernal Díaz, *The Conquest of New Spain*, trans. J. M. Cohen (New York: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 214.
3. Miguel León-Portilla (ed.), *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*, trans. Lysander Kemp (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), p. 93.
4. Díaz, *The Conquest*, p. 406.
5. Agustín de Zárate, *The Discovery and Conquest of Peru*, trans. J. M. Cohen (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 236.
6. The Garrido quotes are from Matthew Restall, "Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in Early Spanish America," *The Americas*, 57:2 (2000), 171.
7. John H. Parry and Robert G. Keith (eds.), *New Iberian World*, 5 vols. (New York: Times Books, 1984), V, p. 10.
8. John Hemming, *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 142.
9. Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003), p. 99.

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CHAPTER 3



Ruling New World Empires

CHRONOLOGY

1501-08	Papal bulls formalizing <i>patronato real</i> in the Indies for Spanish Crown
1503	House of Trade established in Seville
1511	First <i>audiencia</i> created for Indies in Santo Domingo
1524	Council of the Indies founded; twelve Franciscans inaugurate "spiritual conquest" in New Spain
1530s	Hereditary captaincies created in Brazil
1535	Viceroyalty of New Spain created
1542	Viceroyalty of Peru created
1549	Portuguese Crown purchases captaincy of Bahia and names royal governor-general; first Jesuits arrive in Brazil
1557	Sale of municipal offices extended from Castile to the Indies
1569	Authorization of tribunals of the Inquisition in Mexico City and Lima
1609	First high court of appeals (<i>relaçao</i>) established for Brazil
1610	Authorization of Tribunal of the Inquisition in Cartagena, New Granada
1633	Spanish Crown begins systematic sale of appointments to treasury positions
1677	Spanish Crown inaugurates systematic sale of appointments to provincial positions
1687	Spanish Crown begins systematic sale of appointments to <i>audiencias</i>

IMPERIAL ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The New World's huge size and distance from Iberia formed an immutable background against which the Castilian and Portuguese Crowns sought to establish and maintain their authority. Ambitious conquistadors in the Spanish colonies and early settlers there and in Brazil sought to become genuine aristocrats with all the seigneurial rights such status implied. Spanish and Portuguese rulers, in turn, opposed the emergence of a powerful, hereditary nobility located beyond their direct control. In addition, they expected the colonies to contribute to royal revenue. To address these problems, the Crowns relied on bureaucrats located both on the peninsula and in the Americas. The expansion of New World settlement

invariably brought a complement of officials to the capital of each new colonial territory. For nearly three centuries the presence of royal bureaucrats contributed significantly to the colonies' overall political stability.

Problems of Time and Distance

The distance and resulting length of time for communication between the New World and Iberia affected both the offices established in the Americas and the authority their incumbents enjoyed. Winds and currents normally made the trip from Iberia to the Indies shorter than the return voyage. Table 3.1 indicates approximate convoy sailing times in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to and from Cádiz, Sanlúcar, or Seville and selected ports. Many voyages, however, were shorter or longer, sometimes by several weeks. Sailing from Lisbon to Bahia took seventy to nearly one hundred days; voyages to Recife were a little shorter and to Rio de Janeiro, slightly longer. The combination of winds and currents made the travel from Belém, near the mouth of the Amazon, and other northern Brazilian ports to Lisbon easier than to Bahia, thus making communication with officials in the metropolis more convenient than with those in the colonial capital. Slave ships from Angola could reach any Brazilian port in the comparatively brief time of thirty-five to sixty days.

A fleet sent from Spain to the Indies usually returned fourteen to fifteen months later. Annual fleets in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries helped maintain orderly commerce and communication by reducing the time between departures. Small mail boats provided supplemental service, but their sailings were intermittent in the sixteenth century and often only two to four times a year in the seventeenth century, despite the growing irregularity of the fleet's sailings.

The coastal location of all of Brazil's major cities until the establishment of São Paulo facilitated their communication with Lisbon. The inland location of Mexico City and Bogotá, in contrast, added the extra time of land travel. Maintaining speedy communication with cities on the Pacific coast side of the Andes was even more difficult. Travel time from the mining center of Potosí to the Panamanian port of Portobelo, for example, was often seven weeks or more.

The constraints on the speed of communication between any location in the New World and Lisbon or Madrid gave officials resident in the New World greater

Table 3.1 Travel Times to and from an Andalusian Port

DAYS FROM ANDALUSIAN PORT TO		DAYS TO ANDALUSIAN PORT FROM	
Canary Islands	13	Azores	31
Española	51	Florida	65
Havana	64	Havana	67
Cartagena	51	Cartagena	110
Vera Cruz	75	Vera Cruz	128
Isthmus of Panama	75	Isthmus of Panama	137

authority than their counterparts on the peninsula had. At the same time, the distance separating the colonies from their metropolises exacerbated the problem of overseeing the officials themselves. The consequence was substantial flexibility when officials far from the source of their authority responded to local pressures.

Overview of Administration for the Spanish Colonies

The immense physical extent, the presence of densely populated and advanced sedentary civilizations, and scattered rich mineral deposits in the New World led the Crown of Castile to move quickly to gain control over conquistadors, settlers, and natives as successive regions were added to its domain. Most of the major administrative offices used to oversee its political and financial interests, provide justice to colonists and natives, and supervise the allocation of resources—primarily land, native labor, and offices—in the Indies were operating by 1535, although their number increased with later settlement. Fully developed by 1570, the administrative organization underwent little structural modification until the eighteenth century.

The Castilian Crown transplanted a number of institutions proven in Spain and the Canary Islands. General oversight of the colonies and administration of their largest territorial divisions followed the Aragonese model, in which a council resident at court provided the overall supervision and viceroys administered the largest territorial units—Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia. Below the office of viceroy, the Crown turned to Castilian precedents and introduced regional courts, provincial administrators, and treasury officials. It also allowed the municipality and its local officials to exercise a variety of responsibilities. The one institution the Crown refused to introduce into the colonies was the *cortes*, an assembly attended by representatives from major towns and a potential brake on its authority.

The size of the New World possessions made imperative their division into more manageable administrative units. Accordingly, in 1535 Charles I created the Viceroyalty of New Spain for land running from Panama's northern border into the present United States as well as the Caribbean islands and part of Venezuela. The Philippine Islands also were included in this viceroyalty after their settlement in the 1570s. In the early 1540s, Charles created the Viceroyalty of Peru, which included Panama and all Spanish possessions in the Southern Hemisphere except for a strip of Venezuela. Not until the eighteenth century were additional viceroyalties created.

Soon recognizing that the viceroyalties were too large for many administrative purposes, the Crown divided them into units called *audiencias*. These territories increased in number as the lands and non-Indian population of the empire expanded. The *audiencias* were themselves subdivided into districts variously called *corregimientos*, *alcaldías mayores*, and *gobernaciones*. The smallest territorial unit, the municipality, included a city or town and its adjoining hinterland.

Listing the territorial units from smaller to larger—municipalities, provinces, *audiencias*, viceroyalties, and empire—suggests a pyramidal structure culminating in centralized authority held by the king and his advisers in Spain. A more accurate image, however, is that of a group of wheels with their hubs in the *audiencia*

capitals and their spokes extending to the provinces. The Spanish court, in turn, formed the hub of a wheel whose spokes were each *audiencia*. From this perspective, the imperial administration was characterized by decentralization.

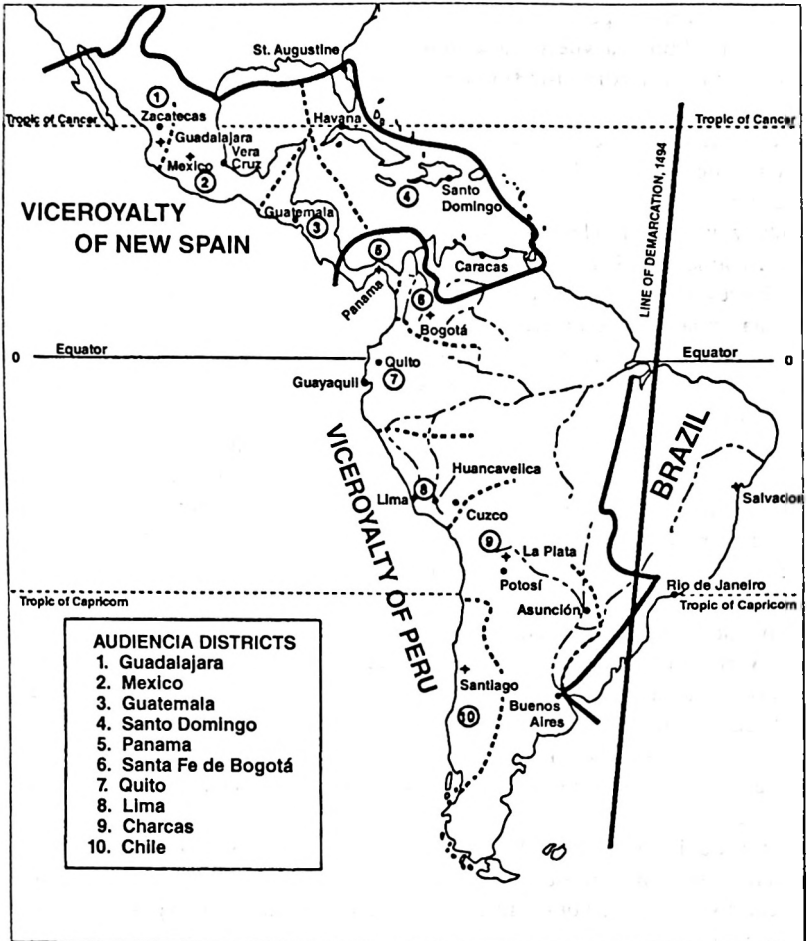
The Council of the Indies

The Council of the Indies was responsible for overseeing colonial affairs from its foundation in 1524 as a “royal and supreme council” until the early eighteenth century. It ranked below the Council of Castile or Royal Council but above all other councils in Spain. Like the older Royal Council for Castile, the Council of the Indies oversaw every kind of government activity in the colonies. Legislative, judicial, financial, commercial, military, and ecclesiastical matters fell under its purview in the blending of authority characteristic of Spanish administrative offices. The council issued laws, made recommendations to the monarch, approved major expenditures in the colonies, and heard cases appealed from the American *audiencias* and the House of Trade. It also made arrangements for *residencias*, the judicial reviews conducted at the conclusion of officials’ terms of office, and occasional general inspections, or *visitas*. In addition, it exercised royal patronage over the Church in the American realms and recommended candidates for most of the high-ranking positions in the New World.

The council employed a variety of senior officials and support staff, with councilors assisted by crown attorneys forming its core. The first councilors were men with university training in civil or canon law, or *ministros togados* (robed ministers), who had previously served on a lower court. In 1604, however, Philip III began naming men with neither credentials in jurisprudence nor a common professional experience. The absence of professional criteria for the appointment of these ministers *de capa y espada* (cape and sword) opened the door to favoritism and abuse.

Only a dozen *ministros togados* named before 1700 had prior New World experience. Moreover, those who were familiar with American affairs usually advanced to the Council of Castile. The Crown’s failure to come to grips with basic personnel issues thus weakened the Council of the Indies’ ability to provide high-quality oversight and administration. The delays inherent in administration by committee, coupled with the ongoing problem of slow communication with officials in the New World, also reduced the tribunal’s effectiveness.

Illustrative of the *togados*’ careers during the Habsburg rule was that of Asturian Alonso de Llano y Valdés. After study at the University of Salamanca, Llano entered the prestigious senior residential college at the University of Valladolid. He earned a baccalaureate in civil law in 1645 and soon held chairs in law. After service in the Chancellery of Granada that began in 1653, he briefly was regent of the Council of Navarre. Named a minister *togado* of the Council of the Indies in 1664, he advanced to the Council of Castile in less than four years. Although his well-established bureaucratic family origins undoubtedly hastened Llano’s progress, the kinds of positions he received before advancing to the Council of the Indies were typical, as was the absence of service in the New World.



Map 5 Major Territorial Divisions in 1650.

Viceroy

When Charles I sent Antonio de Mendoza to New Spain as its first viceroy, he was acknowledging that, despite having taken political power from Cortés, his earlier efforts to establish order and stability in the region had failed. Mendoza, the scion of one of Castile's most illustrious noble families, introduced the requisite aura of proximity to the monarch and display of authority. As Charles's personal representative, he lived in a palace with sixty Indians in constant attendance and a personal escort of gentlemen.

As the foremost executives in the colonies, the viceroys were responsible for general administration; the imposition, collection, and disbursement of taxes and

the remittance of surplus revenue to Spain; the construction and maintenance of public works; the maintenance of public order; defense against both internal rebellions and foreign enemies; support of the Church; protection of the Indians; and the exercise of patronage. At the same time, other high-ranking officials, ecclesiastical hierarchies, *audiencias*, treasury officials, and corporate bodies constrained the viceroys' ability to act independently. The Council of the Indies received from these political rivals correspondence regarding the viceroy's activities and issued an endless stream of orders for implementation. Although the viceroy could delay them and contribute to a revision of directives through the formula *obedezco pero no cumpro* ("I obey but I do not execute"), repeated failure to carry out royal mandates invited conflict and judicial scrutiny after the *residencia*.

Mendoza was the first of ninety-two viceroys in the Indies. Although he and several other viceroys in the sixteenth century served for a decade or more, the average tenure in office for viceroys in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was between six and seven years. With few exceptions, viceroys were born and reared in Spain; for them the New World was a place to serve but was not their home. Especially with its earliest appointments, the Crown exercised special care to name men of impeccable social standing and demonstrated ability. Most bore titles of nobility. Viceroys expected and, despite legal prohibitions, often sought to use their office to benefit both themselves and the large retinues of family, friends, and retainers who accompanied them to their post. By naming retainers to lucrative commissions and positions and smiling beneficently when their minions married well-placed local women or their wives' ladies-in-waiting made favorable matches, the viceroys set an example that other bureaucrats tried to emulate.

Each *audiencia* district had an executive head. The viceroys themselves exercised direct authority over the *audiencia* in which their capital was located. By the late sixteenth century in the subordinate *audiencia* districts, each court had a president-governor who held executive authority. In most cases this official also was in charge of defense for the district and held the title captain-general. Raids by corsairs, Sir Francis Drake, and other English sea captains led the Crown to replace university-trained jurists with experienced military officers as presidents and captains-general of most *audiencias*. Like viceroys, these men were political appointees, served term appointments, and often considered the Americas a place for a tour of duty rather than a permanent residence. Although some entered into illegal commercial activities with local entrepreneurs for private financial gain, their usual intention was to return to Spain with their earnings rather than to invest permanently in local production. This sentiment helps distinguish these term appointees from those men named to lifetime positions: *audiencia* ministers, treasury officials, and numerous municipal officeholders.

Native Sons, *Radicados*, and Outsiders

Most officials became enmeshed in the local society of the city to which they were posted. Some were "native sons," men with positions in the region of their birth. Others were *radicados*, men born elsewhere who had become "rooted" in local

society. Although "outsiders," or newcomers to the region of service, regularly received bureaucratic positions, those with lifetime appointments tended to become *radicados* within a few years. Thus most officeholders were fully integrated into local society and were joined to non-officeholders in a myriad of social and economic ways. Keenly sensitive to local needs, on occasion they could frustrate the implementation of unpopular royal legislation.

For high-ranking positions in the colonies, the Castilian Crown preferred to name outsiders. The sale of appointments in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, however, compromised this principle. Native sons and *radicados* increased in number and prominence, while royal control over colonial government fell to its nadir around 1750. Conversely, local elites enjoyed an unprecedented access to power, both directly through securing offices and indirectly through family and economic ties to officeholders.

The Sale of Offices and Appointments in Spanish America

Following the Crown's bankruptcy in 1557, Philip II extended the practice of selling offices from Castile to the Indies. Municipal offices were among the first to be affected, as the Crown not only put them up for sale but also increased their number in its search for additional revenue. By 1606 the list of posts for sale included the full range of fee-collecting, honorific, and municipal offices. A decree in that year provided that present and future purchasers could hold their posts in full propriety and could pass them on to heirs upon payment of specified taxes. The solid entrenchment of local families in local office for generations, in short, was blessed by law.

The municipality was the cornerstone of Spanish rule and settlement. Wherever colonists settled, they created a town council (*cabildo*) to oversee the development and administration of the new community. Originally, they elected aldermen to administer town affairs and magistrates to provide local justice.

Additional officials included a clerk, a sheriff, a standard bearer, and an inspector of weights and measures. The *cabildo* distributed town lots and nearby garden plots, supervised the construction and maintenance of roads and public works, provided protection against fraud in the markets and against criminal activities in general, regulated holidays and processions, and performed a variety of other duties essential to a settled, civilized existence. For revenue the *cabildos* relied on the rent or lease of town property, local judicial fines, and other modest sources.

An examination of Lima's city council illustrates the expansion of locally born aldermen after three *limeños* purchased their offices in 1561. By 1575 native sons began to outnumber their peninsular counterparts. With rare exceptions, *limeños* henceforth enjoyed numerical preponderance. Similar extensive local representation was present in the elected office of magistrate. Native sons also dominated in Mexico City and numerous other locations. Although the power of the Spanish American city councils declined in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, municipal office positions still enhanced the social status of incumbents.

Excluded from the category of salable offices were positions that the Crown correctly considered most central to its maintenance of authority, revenue, and security—those held by the political administrators and professional bureaucrats. Under unrelenting financial pressure, however, the Crown gradually turned appointments to these offices as well into a source of revenue, although never alienating the posts in perpetuity.

When Spain's repeated involvement in European wars exhausted the Crown's finances, it started selling appointments to treasury posts and the tribunals of accounts in 1633. Provincial administrative positions went on the block in 1677. A decade later the systematic sale of *audiencia* appointments began, and by 1700 a desperate Crown had even sold appointments to the office of viceroy.

The importance of the sale of offices and appointments to the composition of the bureaucracy and its activities cannot be overestimated. First, sales altered the character of bureaucratic recruitment. Service at home, if an appropriate position were available, was far more attractive for both peninsulars and creoles than was service in another district on either side of the Atlantic. Thus an immediate result of such sales was to raise the proportion of native sons and *radicados* in bureaucratic offices. The necessary corollary to this changed recruitment was diminished royal authority over colonial officeholders. In addition, the purchase of an office increased the pressure on the incumbent to secure not only a reliable income but also a profit on his investment. Given the modest salaries associated with most non-fee-earning positions, the temptation to resort to extralegal sources of income was irresistible for many bureaucrats. This, too, worked against the Crown's interest.

Treasury officials throughout the Indies and auditors of the tribunals of accounts established in Lima, Mexico City, and Santa Fe de Bogotá in 1605 received lifetime appointments. Even though these officials usually earned substantially lower salaries than did the *audiencia* ministers, their compensation was well above that earned by the average government employee. Because of the salary, rank, security, and, in some cases at least, financial opportunities available for a person with access to government funds, there was considerable demand for appointments.

When in 1633 the Crown finally turned to systematically selling appointments to treasury positions, it found that the purchasers were often young and inexperienced. Their youth ensured both limited maturity and knowledge and, barring premature death, decades of service. In addition, as money replaced merit as the primary criterion for appointment, would-be purchasers sought the most coveted posts, those in the viceregal capitals. Native sons were especially anxious to secure these offices and, once in place, showed no desire to leave. This limited the potential for advancement from regional subtreasuries and undoubtedly intensified the social, political, and economic ties that the officials shared with the leading local families.

The *audiencias* also had little turnover. The tribunals were the supreme courts of their districts and subject to appeal to the Council of the Indies only in cases involving very large sums of money. In addition, they had administrative and

legislative responsibilities. Named for life or the pleasure of the king, *audiencia* ministers commonly resided many years in a single location. Once in Mexico City or Lima, ministers most commonly left the court only by death. The combination of major responsibilities and protracted service by their ministers made the *audiencias* the most important single civil institution in the Spanish colonies.

Before 1687, few men began their *audiencia* careers in their home district. Nonetheless, the Crown named Americans in every decade from the 1580s onward: nearly a quarter of all *audiencia* appointees from 1610 to 1687 were creoles. The initiation of systematic sales of *audiencia* appointments in late 1687 not only enabled more Americans to reach the courts but also increased the number of native sons. By resorting to the sale of supernumerary or extra appointments, moreover, the Crown clogged the normal chain of advancement from the smaller regional courts to the viceregal courts and greatly expanded the number of *radicados* throughout the system. The sales, which continued during each time of war until 1750, brought unprecedented local direct and indirect access to the tribunals, thus enabling local elite families to influence judicial and political decisions.

Unlike purchased municipal, treasury, and *audiencia* positions, the post of provincial administrator—variously called *alcalde mayor*, *corregidor*, and *gobernador*—was for a term appointment. In the sixteenth century the Crown had introduced provincial administrators both to provide sustenance for non-*encomenderos* and poor *encomenderos* and to expand the royal authority from the urban areas into the countryside and over the indigenous population. The posts were numerous—88 in Peru and about 200 in New Spain in the early seventeenth century. Most provincial administrators held only a single appointment, and service of five years or less was common. Unlike in Castile, where lawyers were named to many *corregimientos*, in the New World the Crown preferred men with military or at least militia backgrounds.

During the century after the stabilization of these provincial positions between 1570 and 1580, the notorious system of *repartimiento* took root. Although located varying distances from the viceregal capitals, the provincial administrators were regularly closely linked to them economically. Using goods provided on credit by merchants in Mexico City and Lima, the officials participated in the profitable *repartimiento* of merchandise by which Indians purchased mules, clothing, food, and other items on credit. In some regions at least, avaricious officials subjected their production to monopolistic control as well.

By 1677 an ever more financially desperate Crown began to sell appointments to provincial positions. Soon nearly all of these positions had passed from viceregal to royal provision, although viceroys regularly made interim appointments to retainers and supporters. As with treasury posts, the Crown sold appointments of *corregidor* and *alcalde mayor* on an individual basis, with the amount and terms of the agreements varying. Unlike the situation for municipal, treasury, and *audiencia* posts, however, creoles seem to have secured fewer, rather than more, provincial offices after the sales began. This may have been because wealthy and well-educated creoles, especially those who traveled to Spain,

devoted their attention to securing either the more prestigious *audiencia* and treasury positions or hereditary offices. In addition, the close link between the *repartimiento* of merchandise and the provincial officials made it particularly advantageous for monopolistic merchants in Spain to lend the purchase price and travel expenses to men whom they knew personally and whom they could trust to distribute their goods—that is, usually men born in Spain. Ties with merchants in Lima and Mexico City persisted as well, however, and provincial officials, whether native sons, *radicados*, or outsiders, formed an important part of the colonial economic world.

The anticipated expenses for a five-year term of the *corregidor* of the Peruvian province of Chancay in the mid-eighteenth century offer a glimpse of the financial requirements of provincial administration: Manuel de Elcorrobarrutia paid 16,000 pesos for his appointment plus an additional 4,000 pesos for fees and taxes. Paying an assistant and an agent and a lawyer in Lima consumed another 7,000 pesos. Personal living expenses he estimated at 15,000 pesos. Gratuities to officials in Lima, entertainment for the viceroy when he visited Chancay, and expenses for the *residencia* and audit cost 9,000 pesos. Interest on this total was 8,700 pesos. To distribute through *repartimiento* 1,900 mules, the *corregidor* anticipated paying 67,004 pesos. This amount purchased the mules and paid for their feed and distribution, tax, salary for collection agents, and interest. But he expected to receive only 80,000 pesos from selling the mules and thus had to sell other items for 46,724 pesos to cover his investment. With only 1,125 able-bodied adult males in the province in 1754, each household had to contribute an average of 112 pesos for this *corregidor* to break even. In the final analysis, the money paid to the Crown to secure this office, the commercial profits of the merchant speculator who advanced the funds to purchase the appointment, and the “profits” earned by the *corregidor* himself all were paid out of the collective earnings of this Indian community.

One unplanned result of the sale of appointments and offices and the evolution of a bureaucracy drawn largely from the native-born and *radicados* was an increasing compatibility between colonial administration and the requirements of local elites. Bureaucrats who borrowed money from merchants and other affluent colonials were not likely to enforce vigorously laws that harmed them. Although the venal antecedents for this sensitivity to local interests are clear, the practical result was to reduce the potential for dangerous conflicts between powerful interest groups in the New World and the distant metropolis.

Brazilian Counterpoint

Portuguese administration in Brazil developed more slowly and modestly in scale than did its Spanish American counterpart. The early concentration of the small colonial population in several coastal locations, the difficulty of intracolonial communication between northern and southern settlements, and the absence of a powerful and ambitious group of conquistadors contributed to a more regionally decentralized and smaller administrative system than that found in the Spanish colonies.

Administrative responsibility for Brazil was divided among various agencies and offices in Portugal. There was no Portuguese equivalent to Spain's Council of the Indies until a decade-long experiment in the early seventeenth century. Then in 1642 the Braganza dynasty created the Overseas Council, which exercised many functions for Portugal's empire similar to those of the Council of the Indies. The *Desembargo do Paço* located in Lisbon oversaw judicial matters for Portugal and the empire, appointing, promoting, and reviewing the conduct of royal magistrates.

Initially the Portuguese Crown sought to treat Brazil as part of the royal factory system used in Africa and Asia. When French merchants began trading for dyewood directly with the natives, however, John III (1521–57) decided that a permanent colony was necessary. In the 1530s he granted to twelve men with good court connections hereditary captaincies extending inland from the Atlantic coast to the Line of Tordesillas. These "donatary captains" received rights similar to those granted in Portugal and the Atlantic islands earlier. Each recipient was to colonize and defend his captaincy in return for a number of revenues, the right to grant land and name numerous officials, and jurisdiction in most criminal and civil matters. The Crown retained several royal taxes and its monopoly over the dyewood trade. But with the exception of São Vicente and Pernambuco, the private enterprise donatary system was not successful. Continued French pressure, moreover, convinced John III to regain some of the authority bestowed in a manner analogous to that employed by the Castilian Crown.

In 1549 John purchased the captaincy of Bahia from its owners and named a governor-general to administer it. Following this political reorganization, exploration, Indian campaigns, and colonization proceeded in the north, beginning in the 1570s. The Portuguese settled Paraíba in the 1580s, Rio Grande do Norte in 1598, Ceara in 1610, Maranhão beginning in late 1615 with the arrival of an expedition to expel the French from a short-lived settlement, and Belém and the lower Amazon from 1616 to 1630.

As the chief executive in Brazil, the governor-general had responsibilities and restrictions similar to those of the Spanish American viceroys. He exercised general oversight of administration, defense, Luso-Indian relations, the treasury, the secular clergy, trade, and land grants. Legislation circumscribed his activities in many ways, however. The governor-general was prohibited from investing in trade or agriculture and could travel outside Bahia only with royal permission. He was subject, moreover, to a special investigation (*devassa*) during his term in office and a review (*residencia*) at its conclusion, checks similar to the Spanish *visita* and *residencia*. Named to a three-year term, many governors-general served longer, some more than two decades. Most came from Portugal's upper nobility and had been professional soldiers; none had been high-ranking clerics. Usually they reached Brazil accompanied by kin and retainers eager to benefit from their patron's largesse.

Governors served as the commanders-in-chief of their captaincies and were responsible for overseeing treasury and judicial offices and protecting the natives.

Like the governors-general, they were to act under standing instructions and directives sent from Lisbon and were subject to the *devassa* and *residencia*. The importance of military security on the exposed Atlantic coast led the Crown to name seasoned military veterans with administrative experience as governors. In the seventeenth century the governors of Pernambuco, Maranhão, and Rio de Janeiro were *fidalgos* and/or in a military order but rarely titled nobles. Professional soldiers of commoner origins sometimes held the governorship of a less important captaincy. Nearly every governor was born in Portugal; among the few Brazilians named, almost none served in their native province. In striking contrast with Spanish America, there is no evidence that governorships were sold.

In 1621 the northern captaincies of Ceara, Maranhão, and Pará were united as the state of Maranhão, whose separate administration continued until 1772. The remaining captaincies were included in a single unit called the state of Brazil. In subsequent territorial reorganizations, the Crown generally added jurisdiction to the governors in Pernambuco and Rio de Janeiro at the expense of the governor-general. It also enhanced the governors' titles; by 1715 both were "governor and captain-general." By 1772 Brazil had nine captaincies-general. Although the office of viceroy replaced that of governor-general in 1720, this change in title was window dressing for a post whose effective authority had been reduced in favor of the governors and captains-general who communicated directly with the authorities in Lisbon.

Although since the late Middle Ages the Portuguese monarchs had relied on royal magistrates to extend their authority at home, they gave the donataries the right to name magistrates in their captaincies if they did not personally oversee the administration of justice. With the decision to assert royal control in 1549, however, John III superimposed a superior royal magistrate to handle appeals from municipal and donatary-named judges and to serve as the royal judge for the captaincy of Bahia. Not until 1609, nearly a century after the first Spanish American *audiencia* was created, did the Portuguese Crown establish a high court of appeals (*relação*) for Brazil in the city of Salvador. Suppressed in 1626 after the Dutch seized Salvador, the court was reestablished in 1652 and remained the sole high court in Brazil until the creation of another in Rio de Janeiro in 1751. As in Spanish America, the judges had administrative and advisory responsibility in addition to judicial service. Their frequent use in assignments outside the court adversely affected its administration of justice and led to repeated complaints about its dilatory conduct.

The most professional bureaucrats in Brazil, members of the high court of Bahia came primarily from modest families neither peasant nor noble. All had a university degree in law, almost invariably earned at the University of Coimbra in Portugal, the only university in the Portuguese world empowered to confer degrees in civil and canon law. Magistrates received appointments for a term of six years, but some stayed longer, occasionally over two decades. Their protracted service routinely brought closer ties to the region they served. Frequent promotions to a court in Portugal, usually the High Court of Oporto, and the paucity

of Brazilians named to the Bahia tribunal, however, meant that the judges' social and economic bonds to the region were less common and intense than those of their counterparts in Spanish America. Corruption, nonetheless, was typical, and magistrates in Brazil repeatedly engaged in commercial affairs and often sought to become landowners. Because most magistrates reached Brazil in middle age, few married locally. The ten native-son magistrates, not surprisingly, were most involved in the local society and economy.

Except for the high executive and judicial posts and municipal council positions, virtually every office in Brazil could be obtained by purchase or royal concession. The key fiscal offices, for example, were proprietary, and the problems of graft and embezzlement noted in Spanish America were present in Brazil as well. The practice of farming out to private tax collectors the tithe, customs duties, and other imposts compounded the financial mismanagement.

As in Spanish America, the municipal council was the fundamental institution for the administration of the towns and their surrounding jurisdictions. The councils were important, among other reasons, because they distributed and leased municipal and common land, fixed the prices on numerous commodities, maintained roads and other public works, helped control slaves, policed the town, and oversaw public health and sanitation. Councils collected taxes and fines, licensed vendors, and leased municipal property for their income. In Salvador the council had three aldermen, two local magistrates, and a municipal attorney selected annually from a list of eligible candidates in a complicated indirect electoral process. Although after 1696 a royal magistrate presided over the council and the governors named the aldermen from eligible citizens, the councils remained important spokesmen for local concerns. The fact that the aldermen were elected prevented the councils from becoming the closed and self-perpetuating corporations that emerged from the sale of the position of *regidor* in Spanish America. But in both Brazil and Spanish America, citizens valued council seats for their prestige as well as for the personal economic benefits available through participation in government.

Although the Portuguese Crown employed *corregedores* as royal agents in the districts in Portugal, it did not extend this middle level of administration to Brazil. Instead, it relied on governors and city councils to administer the reasonably compact zones of settlement along the coast and sent circuit magistrates into less populous regions. Not until the economic boom that began with the discovery of gold in Minas Gerais in the 1690s did the Crown devote much attention to providing administration in the vast Brazilian interior.

The single most impressive feature of bureaucrats in the Iberian empires was the extent to which they were rooted to the region in which they served. Time after time the Crowns turned to newly appointed outsiders when they wanted to effect changes. Thus they employed visitors to investigate abuses or the failure to implement specific legislation. The extent of innovation, however, was often modest. Deeply rooted local elites, of which high-ranked officials formed a part, proved resilient to challenge. When examined closely, so-called change and reform often

turned out to be the old politics with a few new players. Yet it was precisely the flexibility and resilience produced by the fusion of individual bureaucrats' interests and those of other members of the elite in their district that reduced pressure within a system of bureaucratic rule.

THE COLONIAL CHURCH

The Church joined the colonial bureaucracy as a major institutional buttress of Iberian power in the New World. Nurtured by the Crowns financially and legislatively, the Church prospered under royal control greater than that exercised in the peninsula itself. Conversion of the Indians, the theoretical justification for the Iberian presence in the Indies, was the Church's initial priority.

Conversion, the primary vehicle of acculturation, drew indigenous peoples into the cultural orbit of the Spanish and Portuguese settlers. Missionaries simultaneously tried to shield the Indians from the corruption and immorality of Europeans and the labor demands of an encroaching colonial economy. In addition, they worked to end idolatry and to impose Christian beliefs, social practices such as monogamy, and political organization through a mission system that undermined the Indians' potential for resistance and rebellion. These changes helped prepare the indigenous communities for integration into the emerging colonial order.

The Church, especially in cities, also ministered to Spaniards and Portuguese, dominated their education, and provided social services for which the Crown was unwilling to assume direct responsibility. As the Church consolidated its gains, it participated in nearly every dimension of colonial life and accumulated and displayed its wealth. Spiritual enthusiasm and utopian vision declined, and an era of ecclesiastical routine began, although individual examples of clerical activism remained. The composition of the clergy, moreover, was changing, and American-born Iberians came to outnumber European clerics and firmly anchored the Church in the fabric of colonial society.

Royal Patronage

The Spanish kings' control over the Church in temporal matters rested on their *patronato real*, or royal patronage. A series of papal bulls clarified the Crown's responsibility to promote the Indians' conversion and its authority over the Church, educational, and charitable institutions. The Crown received control of tithe income, the tax levied on agricultural production and livestock, to sustain the ecclesiastical hierarchy, its physical facilities, and its activities. It also determined the founding of churches, convents, and hospitals and the appointment and payment of secular clergy, but not friars. Additionally, it licensed clerics to sail to the Indies and inhibited their travel upon arrival. Only after the Council of the Indies certified that a papal document did not infringe on royal patronage could it be sent to the New World.

The Portuguese Crown also exercised a supervisory control over the Church. The *padroado*, patronage, derived from a series of papal bulls issued between 1456

and 1514. The king controlled the creation of colonial bishoprics, the appointment of bishops, the movement of missionaries, and the evangelical efforts among the Indians. The Portuguese Church, however, lacked the wealth and political power of the Spanish Church. The end of Muslim rule in Portugal in the thirteenth century gave the Church a history different from that of its Spanish counterpart. Still, later expansion into North Africa and especially India provided some of the crusading zeal and material rewards that Spain gained during the long Reconquest.

The Evangelical Effort

The conquests of Mexico and Peru opened the most populous regions of the American mainland to ecclesiastics eager to bring Christianity to the natives. Clerics accompanied Cortés on his march to Tenochtitlan, but systematic efforts to convert the indigenous population awaited the arrival of missions sent by the mendicant orders or "regulars," as their members were known. Cortés repeatedly urged Charles I to send Franciscans, preferring them to the more worldly secular or diocesan clergy. Twelve friars arrived in May 1524, the first contingent of an order that would lead conversion efforts in New Spain. In the following decade Dominicans, already active in the Caribbean colonies, and Augustinians joined in the "spiritual conquest." All mendicants took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. And all three orders emphasized conversion. Notably, the Franciscans approached the effort with a millenarian hope that the second coming of Christ would follow their evangelization and creation of a primitive apostolic church.

The friars faced numerous obstacles to their conversion campaign. The dispersed residential patterns of natives outside the urban centers hindered rapid evangelization. Superficial resemblances between native and Christian religious practices increased the difficulty of presenting Christianity as new and distinct. The many native languages posed a special problem. The friars addressed the issue by learning native tongues and also by employing interpreters who quickly made themselves indispensable assistants and links to other parishioners. Yet the friars also enjoyed some advantages.

The conquistadors' success transferred political power to the Spanish and gave great prestige to the Christian religion, for defeat had undermined the gods of the Aztec and Inka, gods the Spaniards refused to respect. The destruction of indigenous religion was systematic, persistent, and incomplete. Clerics singled out Indian priests in particular for persecution; prudence thus dictated that the natives, whatever their private beliefs, publicly comply with their conquerors' religion.

About 800 friars resided in Mexico by 1559. At first they focused heavily on converting native chieftains (*caciques*) and nobles who, they anticipated correctly, would bring their peoples into the Church. Although the Crown wanted the natives to learn Spanish, many religious quickly began to study and preach in the languages of the peoples they were evangelizing. One prodigiously learned cleric, Andrés de Olmos, preached and wrote in more than ten Indian languages. From the establishment of the first press in Mexico in 1539 until 1580, more titles appeared in native languages than in Castilian or in Latin. Nahuatl, the dominant

language of the Aztec Empire, received the most attention, for many native peoples understood it. Friars even taught Nahuatl to establish a common language in New Spain that would keep the natives separated from other Europeans who, they feared, would corrupt them.

Friars in Peru promoted Quechua and Aymara over other indigenous languages. At the behest of the third Provincial Church Council of Lima, in 1584 a press in Lima published a trilingual catechism and set of sermons to be used with the Indians. The form of Quechua employed was the one spoken by the Inka elite in Cuzco. Consequently, clerics in many parts of Peru discovered that they could not necessarily comprehend or speak the local dialect and had to rely on *Indios ladinos*, those natives who had learned Castilian, as assistants in their parish work. Some of these assistants, however, used their skills and positions to promote Andean religious practices as well as to benefit themselves. As occurred in New Spain as well, the failure to instill orthodox Catholicism among the Indians in the archdiocese of Lima provoked lengthy and never fully successful campaigns to extirpate “idolatry,” a catch-all term that Spaniards applied not just to “idols” but to everything to which they objected in religious and customary practices.

To segregate natives from Europeans and to streamline their own activities, friars founded villages to gather Indians scattered throughout a region. The natives’ declining population further stimulated this process of “congregation” in New Spain and “reduction” in Peru. The Augustinians were particularly effective at founding new villages. In Michoacán, for example, they gathered together natives who had been dispersed around Tiripitío and built, using Indian labor, a pueblo complete with plaza, convent, hospital, water supply, and well-constructed houses. In Indian communities such as this the friars oversaw political and economic activities as well as religious affairs. In New Spain by about 1600, the Franciscans had founded more than 140 religious establishments; the Dominicans, some 50; and the Augustinians, more than 80. In Guatemala and Peru, Dominicans and Franciscans were the most active mendicants in creating Christian towns.

The Third Provincial Council of Lima in 1583 believed that a single priest should serve no more than 300 families. This hope, however, was in vain. A shortage of clergy, especially in remote pueblos, created an environment in which the Indians developed local religions that combined Catholicism and traditional religious beliefs and practices in varied and continually evolving ways.

Additionally, pueblos were where regular and secular clergy fought repeatedly over jurisdiction and where clerics frequently countenanced and at times not only participated in unorthodox religious activities but also engaged in behavior that mocked their vows, including that of chastity. Nor did a belief in the sanctity of the church building enjoy universal acceptance. In 1611 a horrified district official in Michoacán discovered not only animals in a village church but also a local Portuguese merchant hanging cloth for sale from both the crucifix and the altar in the sanctuary.

The shortage of clerics in isolated parishes facilitated imposters donning priestly garb and, for a fee, ministering a variety of sacraments. In a three-day

period in 1565, one charlatan celebrated two masses, heard the confessions of one hundred Indians, and performed two marriages. When discovered, these false priests could suffer public whipping and exile from the region.

By baptizing the natives, friars obliged the Church to provide the sacraments of marriage, confession, communion, and confirmation that would enable new converts to live as Christians. The clergy's insistence on monogamous marriage immediately ran up against the polygyny common among the Indian elite, especially in Mexico. Even after two generations of natives baptized during their youth and educated in Christian precepts, some Indians still married one wife in the Church and kept other women as concubines, although this custom faded away over time.

The mendicants introduced lay confraternities or *cofradías* into native communities. In return for members' dues, these organizations ensured proper funerals and memorial masses as well as sometimes a small amount of money for widows and orphans. *Cofradía* events enjoyed village-wide participation, and joyous celebrations marked its saint's day in particular. The institution won rapid support, and in many communities its officers became active associates of the friars and devotees of the Virgin Mary. Local elites considered the Virgin their protector and a replacement for the prior association of local gods with community lands. Confraternities also sought to maintain the physical condition of the church building itself and to acquire additional adornments. The officers, moreover, perceived that *cofradía* membership and shared goals with the local friar enabled them to enter successfully the category of "*ladino*" and to reframe their religious beliefs by drawing upon both their prior concepts and Christianity. Thus confraternities emerged as a central institution in native communities and remained vitally important throughout the colonial era.

Many Indians responded enthusiastically to evangelization. Religion was a central feature of native life throughout the Americas before the conquest, and the vanquished could not imagine existence without belief in the supernatural. In addition, they found the Spaniards' veneration of images such as the Virgin, the Cross, and saints familiar and comforting.

The customary Spanish practice of building churches or at least placing crosses on preexisting religious sites reaffirmed the sacredness of the locations and promoted an evolving mixture of Christian and indigenous beliefs. From its beginning in the sixteenth century, the natives' veneration of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the most celebrated image of the Virgin Mary in New Spain, was associated with the persistence of their earlier devotion to the native goddess Tonantzin.

The Indians perceived Guadalupe/Tonantzin as "God," much to the dismay of the Franciscans, who opposed the mingled beliefs and practices that came to characterize "Christianity" among the natives. Crediting Our Lady of Guadalupe with miraculous healings, Indians flocked throughout the colonial era to her sanctuary on a hill just north of Mexico City. During a terrible epidemic in 1736-37, ecclesiastical and civil officials in the capital agreed to make her patroness of Mexico

City. As the wave of illness subsided, devotion to the Virgin increased and, after papal approval twenty years later, she became patron throughout Spain's realms.

In 1526 the Franciscans opened the College of Santiago Tlatelolco near Mexico City to train the sons of the native nobility for the priesthood. The students learned reading, writing, music, Latin, and philosophy, among other subjects. Some mastered Latin and could translate it into Spanish and Nahuatl. Yet this effort to train a native clergy ultimately failed. Antinative sentiment among many non-Franciscan clerics fueled opposition to ordaining natives. No alumni entered the clergy, and with its principal reason for existence negated, the Tlatelolco experiment ended. From 1555 to 1591, Indians were formally prohibited from receiving ordination. Subsequent unofficial discrimination ensured perpetual inferiority for Indians in the Mexican Church.

The Franciscan Vasco de Quiroga invested most of his own wealth in the creation of mission communities in Michoacán modeled on Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*. Natives held land communally and learned new skills based on European technology, but friars regulated their labor closely to prevent abuse. In addition to a church, the settlements provided hospitals and a wide array of social welfare benefits. After his appointment as bishop of Michoacán in 1537, Vasco de Quiroga continued to promote the use of mission settlements, a strategy later used successfully by other orders and the Jesuits as the Christian frontier was pushed north to Texas and California and south to the Río de la Plata region.

Dominican Vicente de Valverde accompanied Pizarro to Cajamarca. Franciscans and Mercedarians had arrived before Atahualpa's execution, and Augustinians appeared in 1551. However, friars in Peru did not duplicate the intensive evangelization of New Spain's "spiritual conquest." Although the disruption of civil war undoubtedly hindered efforts at conversion, it appears that the quality and enthusiasm of the early clerics in Peru were below those of the friars in Mexico. Not until the first Conciliar Council of Lima in 1551 did the Church launch a full-scale attack on surviving Inka religious activities. Declaring that all Andean people who had died before the conquest resided in Hell, the council vigorously attacked the worship of *huacas* and ancestors. Priests and government officials henceforth destroyed *huacas* and burned mummies whenever possible. The response in the central Andes was a millenarian movement in the 1560s that believed that the *huacas*, angry at being deserted for Catholicism, had brought epidemics, from which the only escape was a return to traditional religious beliefs. Considering the movement heretical and thus treasonous, the state suppressed the threat by the 1570s.

After reaching Brazil in 1549, the Society of Jesus expanded to Peru in 1568 and New Spain in 1572. Quickly the Jesuits came to dominate elite education in the cities. In addition, they soon began to establish missions in locations from the northern frontier of Mexico to Paraguay. The first of the famous Guaraní mission villages in Paraguay was founded in 1610. At their peak in 1732, 30 villages were home to over 140,000 Indians.



Portrait of San Ignacio Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

The Society of Jesus dominated the evangelical effort in Brazil after Manoel da Nobrega and five other Jesuits reached Salvador in 1549; the few Franciscans already living in the colony had shown little interest in converting the Indians. Defeated natives near Salvador provided the Jesuits' first converts. As in New Spain and Peru, European military successes enhanced the prestige of the new religion and enabled superficial conversion. The Jesuits concentrated the Indians in villages (*aldeias*) to maximize the evangelical potential of their small numbers. After 1557, when voluntary concentration failed, the Jesuits supported Governor Mem de Sá in crushing the remaining armed resistance. By 1560 more than 40,000 Indians were in the Jesuit *aldeias* of Bahia alone, and by the end of the century the colony's 169 Jesuits controlled nearly the entire pacified Indian population.

Missionaries in Brazil promoted the use of Tupi as a common language. In the *aldeias* they taught crafts, introduced new crops, and enforced European work habits and social practices—monogamy and an abhorrence of nudity, in particular. They also fostered European culture, especially music.

After the early achievements—mass baptisms and the creation of the first *aldeias*—the Jesuits realized the shallowness of the conversion experience. Old beliefs persisted, intermingled with Christian doctrine. By the 1560s their reports and letters clearly revealed growing frustration. As they recognized the difficulty of converting adults, the priests turned increasingly to the close supervision and education of young males. When some of these youthful converts denounced their own elders for continuing ancient customs, the missionaries happily noted their achievement.

The development of mission settlements as a conversion tool led necessarily to conflict between the Church and the settlers. The colonial economies of Latin America depended on Indian labor. Miners, planters, and *obraje* owners coveted control over converted Indians already accustomed to the discipline and organization of the missions and familiar with rudimentary European technology. Because the missionaries, especially the Dominicans and the Jesuits, tried to defend the Indians from what they saw as exploitation and abuse, they continually found themselves in political and judicial clashes with the settlers. As epidemics drastically reduced the Indian population, these pressures grew. In Brazil, for example, Jesuit Antônio Vieira's efforts to protect the Indians led to a revolt and the temporary expulsion of the Society from Maranhão and Pará in 1661. Earlier, Jesuits working with the Guaraní in disputed borderlands that separated Brazil and Paraguay had armed their Indians against slave raiders from São Paulo. Forced to choose between the claims of the missionaries and those of the wealthy colonial elites, the monarchs of both Spain and Portugal moved to restrict the Church's control over pacified Indian communities.

Religious Orders in the Cities

About 1570, the mendicant orders in New Spain expanded their efforts in the cities. During the next six decades, Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, Discalced Carmelites, and Mercedarians founded forty-seven residential communities, bringing the total to more than seventy. The Society of Jesus, which reached Mexico in 1572, also expanded rapidly as the fathers established *colegios* in numerous cities.

The Church reached Peru a decade after the mission of twelve Franciscans set foot in Mexico. When Pizarro founded Lima in 1535, he allocated city lots to the Dominicans and the Franciscans. By 1630 the mendicant orders and the Society of Jesus had nearly 3,000 friars and fathers in residential communities in Upper and Lower Peru, Quito, Buenos Aires, and Chile.

The Mature Church

The Council of Trent (1545–63) initiated the Catholic Reformation that provided a response to Protestantism. The council sought to increase the education and virtue of both clergy and lay believers and required clerics to teach the

catechism. It also encouraged asceticism, promoted a more uniform and elaborate liturgy, and endorsed popular devotions. Not surprisingly, its mandates had more effect in the cities of the Indies than in rural villages populated by Indians and *mestizos*.

Secular clergy gradually obtained a dominant position in the Church, initially monopolizing Spanish parishes and cathedral chapters. Friars, however, were a majority of bishops and archbishops until the mid-eighteenth century. Unlike the regulars—all of whom took vows of poverty and received subsistence from their orders—secular priests bore primary responsibility for their own financial security. This led them to pursue a variety of economic activities. Although prohibited from engaging in wholesale or retail trade, crafts, and direct employment outside the Church, many ignored these restrictions.

Secular clergy were present in Brazil from the first decades of Portuguese settlement but had little influence. Indeed, the Jesuit Nobrega insultingly characterized the secular priests of Bahia as “irregular, apostates and excommunicates.” The first bishop of Bahia arrived in 1552, and in 1676 the position was elevated to archbishop. By the late eighteenth century six bishops were subject to the archbishop of Bahia. While the development of the episcopal structure coincided with an expansion in the number of secular clerics, regulars made up approximately half of the bishops appointed before 1800 in Brazil.

The establishment of bishoprics and archbishoprics in Spanish America and an increased number of secular clergy led to conflict with the regulars. At issue was the control of the native population and its labor and income. Justly proud of their accomplishments, the regulars were loath to share the benefits with seculars, whom they considered inferior in ability and commitment. Antagonism was not limited to words. On one occasion in 1559, seculars raided the Dominican convent in Puebla, Mexico, sacked it, broke the prior's teeth, and departed with every item of value. On another occasion Franciscans armed 600 Indians from the Toluca region of Mexico with bows and arrows and shields and then led them in destroying the local church controlled by secular clergy.

In 1568 Philip II named a committee to investigate the relations between seculars and regulars. The resulting *Ordenanza del Patronazgo* of 1574 increased the power of the secular clergy and limited the regulars' activities. It was many years, however, before, secular priests actually replaced regulars in many Indian parishes. Henceforth, regulars' mission activities, when they took place, occurred primarily in isolated frontier areas.

The Church touched the whole of colonial society, from wealthy aristocrats to black slaves, not only through its religious services and *cofradías* but also through the application of canon or church law. The local elite's support was visible in both the ornamentation they provided for the churches and the elaborate funerals they received after their deaths. Especially in urban areas, the sacrament of marriage gave even the most humble parishioners access to church law. Clerical support enabled black slaves and freedmen to use canon law to establish the right to marry and to engage in marital relations without their masters' interference.

An Economic Institution

By 1600 the Church was beginning the financial ascent that would make its economic resources second to none in the colonies. The growth of commercial agriculture in New Spain, Peru, Central America, and Brazil brought unprecedented revenues from the tithes in the 1590s. Following the Jesuits' lead, the regular orders—save perhaps the Franciscans—became active and successful landowners. In New Spain and Peru, the expansion of mining and commerce after the conquest era created excess capital that some owners used to endow pious works.

Pious works included chantries, the foundation of convents and colleges, and the provision of dowries and burial funds. Chantries enabled individuals to arrange for memorial masses in perpetuity for the benefactor's soul. The founder and his heir typically designated a family member as chaplain. This strategy had the great advantage of retaining in the family the income of the endowment.

The Church was the most important source of mortgages in the Indies, normally receiving a return of about 5 or 6 percent in the sixteenth century. The conditions of the loan, however, had to be such that the recipient was buying capital rather than simply borrowing money at interest, a transaction that canon law forbade as the sin of usury. Not only was the Church the major source of investment capital, it also became a prominent colonial property owner.

Over time, tithes; fees that clerics received for marriages, burials, and other services; gifts; and pious works enabled the Church and individual clerics to become extremely wealthy. The Church acquired both urban and rural property. The Jesuits, religious orders, and individual secular priests actively operated in the colonial marketplace, producing sugar, wine, textiles, pottery, and other products. In Mexico City and other large municipalities, the Church was the largest landlord, renting its property to both residential and commercial users. By employing part of its wealth and income to sustain cultural activities and welfare functions for the poor, the Church added substantially to the well-being of colonial society.

Some orders routinely opened schools in conjunction with their convents to educate their successors as well as young males who would later assume other responsibilities in society. The Jesuits in Lima began organizing schools from the time they reached the City of Kings in 1568. The Jesuit college in Bahia had 215 students by 1589 and offered a curriculum that extended from the elementary grades to the study of theology. Together with the Dominicans, the Jesuits dominated education until they were expelled from Portugal, Spain, and their colonies after 1750. The Dominicans were influential in founding Lima's University of San Marcos, which was established in 1551 but functioned as a convent school until the 1570s. The University of Mexico, also authorized in 1551, held its first classes in 1553, in part as a result of efforts by Archbishop Juan de Zumárraga. Eventually nearly every major city in Spanish America except Buenos Aires and Potosí had a university.

Almost immediately, the universities increased the number of educated native sons and other creoles qualified for vocations in the Church and the royal bureaucracy. Consequently, the composition of the clergy began to change noticeably.

By the early seventeenth century, local-born creoles were prominent in both the secular clergy and at least several of the regular orders. Although a few well-placed *castas* and Indians initially enjoyed limited educational opportunities, they were later excluded from the universities, colleges, and even primary schools. This restriction was imposed in Lima in the 1640s, despite the Jesuits' resistance. Brazilians also entered the Church, but the need to pursue a university education in Portugal retarded this development.

The presence of Europeans and American-born clerics in both the secular and regular clergy added another rift to the already divided Church. Conflict focused on the highest positions, especially in the mendicant orders; the Jesuits were spared this conflict because their provincials and supervisors were named in Europe. Europeans believed themselves superior to their American rivals by virtue of their birth in the Old World. This became a grave problem in Spanish America, for the growing creole majority threatened the peninsulars' dominance in provincial elections. The peninsulars responded by obtaining decrees that authorized mandatory alternation of offices between themselves and creoles. In mid-seventeenth-century Peru, the Franciscans were the only mendicants not bound by this forced rotation in office. Beginning in the 1660s the peninsular Franciscans sought, and in 1683 received, final approval for rotation in office. Eventually the Franciscans in Brazil also instituted this practice.

The secular clergy of Spanish America experienced less conflict because creole clerics both repeatedly sought and at times secured high ecclesiastical offices. By 1640 five men born in the Viceroyalty of Peru had been named archbishops, and another twenty-three had been named bishops in the New World. Nonetheless, peninsulars secured most appointments at these levels. The five high-ranking positions that constituted the cathedral chapters, in contrast, routinely had heavy native son and other creole representation from at least the early seventeenth century. Native sons also predominated at the parish level, although by 1700 some *mestizo* and even a few Indian priests were present. Only the wealthiest parishes, however, attracted priests born in Spain.

An increase in the number of American-born clerics in the seventeenth century and the Church's growing economic influence bound it to American soil in a way that the early focus on missionary activity had not. Nearly every colonial family of the middle and upper sectors had relatives in one or more of the Church's branches. Leaving aside the pervasiveness of religion in colonial society, the clergy themselves were pervasive in creole society at its most fundamental level, that of the family.

The León Garavito y Illescas family illustrates this pattern. Francisco de León Garavito immigrated to Lima, where he prospered as a merchant, property owner, law professor, government attorney, and alderman. About 1574 he married Isabel de Illescas. The wealthy couple's sons included an *oidor* of the Audiencia of Panama, three Dominicans, a Jesuit, and a secular priest in Lima. Isabel's four sisters entered Lima's prestigious convent of La Encarnación early in the seventeenth century, and three of her daughters followed them. All became nuns of the black veil (that is, full voting members of the house), and one was elected abbess.

Nunneries

The seven nuns of the Illescas and León Garavito families underscore the presence of women in ecclesiastical vocations. Convents enabled women to pursue a religious life, control their own affairs, obtain and provide education, and, in many cases, live a very comfortable existence. Protected from the demands of husbands and families, many nuns cultivated the arts and literature, providing a venue for the transfer of European culture. Most convents were established after 1570 and reached their apogee in the seventeenth century. At their height, the thirteen convents in Lima housed more than 20 percent of the city's women. Few convents were founded after 1700, and in Peru, at least, the number of nuns fell sharply beginning in the early eighteenth century.

The first convent in Brazil was founded in Salvador in 1677. Before then, small numbers of Brazilian women seeking this contemplative life entered convents in Portugal or the Azores. By the end of the eighteenth century three more convents were added. But Mexico City still had proportionately twice as many nuns as did the capital of colonial Brazil.

The many religious orders for women in the colonies were founded locally and maintained only loose ties to metropolitan establishments. All female orders before the 1750s followed contemplative routines and played no substantial educational or charitable roles. The elite within these orders were nuns of the black veil, the most educated group of women in the colonies. Almost exclusively local creoles, they brought with them sizable dowries, and alone could vote, serve in convent offices, and sing the canonical hours in the choir. One of Brazil's few convents was Our Lady of Mercedes, founded in 1735 in Bahia by the wealthy heiress and first abbess Ursula Luisa de Monserrat. Rich families commonly purchased or built living quarters or cells for their daughters and made specified donations to the houses. Although convents occasionally waived the required dowry—most frequently for women of unusual musical ability—they did enforce the social prerequisites. In the convents in Lima, for example, nuns of the black veil were daughters of socially prominent families and accordingly were addressed as “Doña.”

Other women in colonial convents lacked family ties to the local social and economic elite. Nuns of the white veil served as housekeepers and in other activities considered inappropriate for those of the black veil. Born into modest white and mixed-race families, their limited opportunities in the convents reflected their social and economic inferiority. Still lower were the poor, mixed-race women who served the nuns of the white veil. With servants and black slaves present as well, convents in many ways mirrored the social hierarchies outside their walls.

The convents participated actively in the colonies' economic life. Not only did their residences, some occupying several city blocks, require constant attention, but the nuns and their servants, who totaled nearly 1,000 persons in some of Lima's larger convents in the seventeenth century, were important consumers as well. In addition, the convents owned urban property both for their own residences and schools and as sources of income. As did other bodies within the Church, the wealthy convents earned capital by providing mortgages, mainly on urban properties. Unlike the Jesuits and most male orders, however, the female orders normally did not own rural estates.



San Martín de Porres was the illegitimate son of a Spanish nobleman and his black servant. He entered the Dominican order in Lima, Peru, where he became famous for his visions and an ability to heal the sick.

The early presence and importance of the convents, the vigor of the male religious orders, the size of the secular clergy, and the continued support of both the colonists and the Crown combined to make the Church in Latin America a powerful, wealthy institution whose influence permeated colonial life. Although examples of individual clerics failing to observe their vows and conniving with colonists to exploit the Indians certainly can be found, their number pales in comparison with the many clergymen who sought to establish and maintain Christianity among the native peoples. A bastion of European culture and civilization, the Church in Latin America was still a strong institution at the close of the colonial era.



Painting of an anonymous Inka noblewoman identified as the first Christian convert. She was believed to have killed and beheaded a man who challenged her vow of celibacy. The image borrows heavily from the story of Judith who was represented in Christian iconography with the head of the Assyrian general she murdered to save her people.

THE INQUISITION

In 1569 the Spanish Crown replaced the earlier and unsatisfactory apostolic inquisitions in its colonies by authorizing the establishment of tribunals of the Inquisition in Mexico City and Lima. It approved a third tribunal for Cartagena in 1610. Unlike the fear of converted Jews (*conversos*) that had prompted the Inquisition's creation in Spain in 1480, the tribunals in the New World were founded out of

the Crown's desire to maintain the purity of the Catholic faith against heretical Protestant beliefs that foreign interlopers brought to the Indies. Nonetheless, once created, the Inquisitions of Peru and New Spain periodically prosecuted "New Christians"—primarily converted Jews and their descendants—who persisted in the faith of their ancestors. Within their districts the tribunals held jurisdiction over all non-Indians, including Protestants, for they had received Christian baptism. The Indians' exemption reflected the Crown's belief that they were permanent minors of limited moral capacity. Thus it left episcopal authorities with jurisdiction over the natives in matters of faith.

The colonial tribunals were similar to their peninsular predecessors in organization and procedure. Normally a tribunal had several inquisitors, an expert who examined evidence for heresy, a prosecutor, a constable, and a notary. Other officials were added as necessary. In each province of their jurisdiction, the tribunals had investigators or commissaries, who could be lay or clerics, and lay police, or *familiares*, to arrest suspects and enforce the bodies' decrees. Although the first inquisitors were born and educated in Spain, by 1640 the tribunals in Mexico City and Lima had each received at least one creole inquisitor. A sprinkling of creoles continued to secure appointments as long as the Holy Office existed.

Because it was a powerful body independent of civil and ecclesiastical hierarchies, the Inquisition unavoidably conflicted with both. Its authority, moreover, made it an attractive ally for persons who found the other hierarchies unable or unwilling to support their ambitions. The judicial privileges the tribunal's agents enjoyed further enhanced the advantages of cooperation and encouraged the participation of wealthy citizens. The tribunal also sought familiars (*familiares*) who were well placed in local society, an approach that guaranteed prominent support.

The Inquisition initiated a case only after receiving a denunciation. Although self-denunciation was possible, usually by an individual who anticipated lighter penance as a result, generally a third party levied the charge. The accepted procedure was for the inquisitors to gather corroborating evidence before taking further action, a process that could drag on for years. When the evidence seemed conclusive, the tribunal's agents arrested and jailed the accused and sequestered his or her property for later auction as necessary to pay the costs of imprisonment.

Secrecy most distinguished the Inquisition's procedure from that of other tribunals. The accused was totally cut off from the outside world while the case proceeded; in some instances this isolation lasted years and terminated only with death. Moreover, the victim was ordered to confess an offense so that he or she could receive absolution from and reconciliation with the Church. He or she, however, was not informed of the charge or the accuser. In a majority of cases, probably most, these omissions were not a major problem, for the accused was indeed guilty. For an innocent party, however, the difficulties of demonstrating innocence through such means as naming personal enemies or claiming intoxication were formidable.

The Inquisition prescribed punishment or penance at an *auto de fe* or, literally, an "act of faith." An *auto de fe* could be private or public. Here the condemned persons revealed remorse for their sins and professed their hatred of heresy. Public

autos were great spectacles that officials, clerics, nobles, and the general populace attended. The Inquisition ordered death only for non-recanting heretics. Throughout its existence in Spanish America, it mandated this penalty in fewer than a hundred cases, perhaps 1 percent of the total considered. Bigamy, blasphemy, and other offenses against public morality were the tribunal's primary concerns. For such offenses, fines, flogging, confiscation of property, gagging, exile, and service on the galleys were the principal sentences. Punishments were more severe in the early years of the Holy Office than later. After the mid-seventeenth century the largest *autos de fe* had taken place, and the tribunals' importance had begun to wane.

In Lima the Inquisition arrested and tried nearly one hundred purported secret Jews between 1635 and 1639; most were of Portuguese descent, and many numbered among the city's wealthiest merchants. After lengthy imprisonments and numerous interrogations, the tribunal condemned thirteen to be burned at the stake. Two confessed, begged the Inquisitors for reconciliation, and were spared. On January 23, 1639, the remaining eleven were marched through the streets of Lima, along with forty-two persons sentenced to flogging or service in the galleys as penance for sorcery or other lesser infractions. The spectacle attracted an enormous crowd that included the hierarchies of Church and state. Following a lengthy ceremony of religious theater that featured a mass, a sermon, and the reading of detailed summaries of the accusations, the eleven were executed. They were burned at the stake along with an effigy of the one Jew who had committed suicide in the Inquisition's prison.

The Inquisition employed censorship in its efforts to protect the colonists from heresy and unorthodox ideas. This included both searching ships that arrived at colonial ports for prohibited literature, works listed on the Spanish *Index* of forbidden publications, and censoring manuscripts before publication by a New World press. Although these activities certainly limited the amount of protest literature that entered the colonies and slowed the publication of locally written works, the censors were most interested in ecclesiastical materials.

The Spanish population as a whole supported the Inquisition. Most Spaniards in the Americas did not feel personally threatened by the tribunal. They considered protection from heresy a worthy objective and actively participated in prosecuting those persons who strayed too far from the accepted morality. In an era in which formal political representation was absent, moreover, the Inquisition provided, during its first century of existence in particular, an alternative institution from which the colonists could seek support for their own purposes. The political dimension of the Inquisition gave added importance to the repeated conflicts, often over seemingly trivial matters, that the inquisitors had with civil and ecclesiastical authorities.

Portugal established an effective Inquisition only in 1547. Although there were several tribunals in Portugal and one in Goa, a separate tribunal for Brazil was not created. Bishops, familiars, or other agents that the Portuguese Holy Office employed in the colony investigated persons accused of heresy or other offenses. Those persons considered guilty were shipped to Portugal for trial. The procedures

employed were similar to those in Spain and Spanish America, except that the Portuguese Inquisition may have been even harsher in its early years.

On three occasions the Portuguese Inquisition sent special agents to Brazil. The first reached Bahia in 1591 and spent four years investigating the numerous New Christians residing in the colony. Two other inquisitorial visits took place in 1618 and 1763–69. As in the Spanish colonies, local agents rather than special investigators usually filed charges of bigamy, blasphemy, reading of prohibited literature, and other infractions. Such offenses led to investigations far more often than did allegations of heresy.

The Church provided for the spiritual life of a diverse and complex population and was one of the principal buttresses of social stability and public order in both Spanish America and Brazil. It organized much of colonial society's communal life through public celebrations associated with the religious calendar. By converting Indians and blacks to Christianity, it extended European cultural values; its role in education and public charity further emphasized its centrality in the lives of rich and poor alike.

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CHAPTER 4



Population and Labor

CHRONOLOGY

1518	Crown authorizes importation of slaves from Africa
1520	Smallpox reaches New Spain
1520s	First <i>encomiendas</i> distributed in New Spain
1530s	Measles appears in New Spain and Central America; first <i>encomiendas</i> distributed in Peru
1542	New Laws threaten <i>encomenderos</i> and order abolition of Indian slavery
mid-1540s	Major pestilence strikes New Spain and Central America
1550s	"Congregations" and labor drafts (<i>repartimiento</i>) introduced in central Mexico
1560s	Jesuits in Brazil resettle natives
1562	First smallpox epidemic in Brazil
1570s	"Reductions" and forced labor drafts (<i>mita</i>) imposed in Peru by Viceroy Francisco de Toledo
1590s	Labor drafts introduced in eastern highlands of Colombia
c. 1625–50	Nadir of native population in New Spain; free wage labor largely supplants <i>repartimiento</i> in New Spain
1718–20	Epidemic reduces population of Peru to low point of colonial era

CHANGES IN THE COLONIAL POPULATION

The arrival of the Spanish and Portuguese initiated major population changes in the Americas. For the indigenous peoples, European conquest and settlement triggered a demographic disaster. In contrast, the small numbers of Iberians who settled in the New World after the conquest expanded as immigration and, within a few years, natural reproduction swelled their ranks. The African slave trade added a third racial group to the colonial gene pool, and, in some geographic areas, African slaves and their descendents became a majority of the population. Finally, free and forced sexual unions among Europeans, Indians, and blacks resulted in the creation of new ethnic and cultural identities. These groups would increase in number and importance throughout the colonial era.

The relative importance of the decline of the native population, European immigration, the African slave trade, and the development of new mixed identities

varied by region. Urban and rural areas typically exhibited substantially different racial compositions, rates of population growth or decline, and even definitions of ethnic identities. Within specific geographic areas, the effects of an epidemic or new economic opportunities, for example the discovery of gold or silver, could dramatically influence internal resettlement and migration.

The Indian Population

The size of the Americas' indigenous population at the time of the Iberians' arrival is unknown. Scholarly estimates range from about 8 million to over 100 million. Substantial differences also appear in the population estimates for each major region. Did central Mexico have fewer than 5 million inhabitants or over 25 million? Did the Andean region have 3 million or 30 million or more? Did Central America have fewer than 1 million or over 10 million? Did Brazil have 1 million or more than 6 million? There is no consensus among the experts. However, a total indigenous population of between 35 million and 55 million seems plausible. The fact that the indigenous population plummeted soon after the Iberians arrived is not disputed.

Efforts to estimate the size of indigenous populations begin with a limited number of imperfect sources. Among the most reliable are archaeological studies that examine precontact housing, burial sites, land use and settlement patterns, social structure, and native technologies, but these are available for only a very limited number of locations. Written sources produced by Europeans include contemporary estimates by participants in the conquests and early settlements, records of Spanish and Portuguese authorities who counted native populations to assess labor and tribute obligations, early censuses, and church records of baptisms and burials. Notably absent are comprehensive population counts.

Some scholars begin with a source such as an early list of tributaries or an estimate of Christian converts and then multiply the original number by some estimate of family or household size to approximate total preconquest population. Others assume the mortality rates of known epidemics in a region and then extrapolate backward from a later figure. Either approach yields numbers that are inherently unreliable. Using the improved documentation available after the Spanish Crown began reforming tax collection in the mid-sixteenth century, however, results in a much narrower and more reliable range of estimates than those produced for preceding years.

Disease

Multiple reasons explain the sharp reduction in the Americas' indigenous populations. The loss of life, physical devastation, and disruptions of native agriculture and trade that accompanied the conquest took a terrible toll. The mistreatment and abuse of Indians by Spanish and Portuguese settlers increased mortality rates by undermining long-established systems of social welfare and mutual assistance. Forced labor obligations imposed by colonial governments weakened family and kinship structures, leading in many cases to lower fertility rates and higher infant

mortality rates because of malnutrition. The combined effects of these assaults on indigenous society were multiplied by the cultural crises and psychological traumas associated with conquest and forced conversion. Buffeted by this complex of threats, Indian peoples had limited ability to resist the deadly epidemic diseases unintentionally introduced by Europeans and Africans.

More than any other single reason, epidemic diseases to which the native populations had no immunity led to astronomical mortality rates. Smallpox reached Mexico before the defeat of the Mexica, devastating the population of Tenochtitlan during the Spanish siege. The deadly trajectory of the disease then moved through southern Mexico into Central America, ultimately reaching the northern fringes of the Inka Empire sometime after 1525. Measles first appeared in New Spain and Central America in the early 1530s. In the mid-1540s, a virulent pestilence accompanied by bleeding of the nose and eyes produced high mortality rates in central Mexico and Central America. One Spanish settler in Guatemala wrote to the king saying, "God sent down such sickness upon the Indians that three out of every four of them perished."¹ Thirty years later, another outbreak, perhaps typhus or plague, afflicted the same areas, again killing tens of thousands if not more. Five other pandemics struck Central America by 1750.

After 1540, the Andean region suffered repeated epidemics. Either typhus or pneumonic plague carried off about 20 percent of the population in 1546. This was followed in the 1550s by measles, smallpox, and influenza outbreaks. Smallpox would later repeatedly assault the indigenous population. With the epidemic of 1718–20, the population of the Andean area fell to its lowest level. Smallpox raged throughout Brazil from 1562 to 1565. This first infection was brought to Salvador, Bahia, by a ship from Lisbon. Within three or four months, 30,000 Indians had died in nearby Jesuit missions, and eventually the disease spread from Pernambuco to São Vicente. The later African slave trade touched off a succession of epidemics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

These examples document important differences in the magnitude and timing of native population declines across the New World. In many regions the downward trend eventually gave way to recovery as native populations gained increased immunity to the new diseases. In other areas, the Caribbean islands for example, indigenous peoples were essentially eliminated by the effects of conquest and disease.

Regional Population Changes

The most extensive demographic research has focused on central Mexico, the region from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec to the northern limits of the Aztec Empire. Woodrow W. Borah provided estimates of its population (see Table 4.1). The figures in this table are estimates, not exact counts, and those for the period before 1568 have provoked substantial dispute. Many scholars are more comfortable with an estimated population of 10 million to 13 million for 1518 rather than 25.2 million. However, most historical demographers agree that the native population decreased rapidly after the arrival of Cortés and reached its lowest point in

Table 4.1 Population Changes, 1518–1622

YEAR	NATIVE POPULATION (IN MILLIONS)
1518	25.2
1532	16.8
1548	6.3
1568	2.65
1585	1.9
1595	1.375
1605	1.075
1622	0.75

SOURCE: WOODROW W. BORAH, *JUSTICE BY INSURANCE: THE GENERAL INDIAN COURT OF COLONIAL MEXICO AND THE LEGAL AIDES OF THE HALF-REAL* (BERKELEY AND LOS ANGELES: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS, 1983), p. 26.

the second quarter of the seventeenth century. By 1650 the indigenous population began a period of sustained growth that, except for periods of cyclical decline caused by epidemics and famine, continued throughout the remainder of the colonial era.

The century-long decline of the native population in Mexico cannot be generalized to every region and locale. Population losses were greatest in tropical coastal regions, where contacts with arriving Spaniards were most frequent and the hot and wet climate proved hospitable to the more rapid transmission of the new diseases. Native populations never recovered in these regions, unlike at the higher elevations of the more temperate interior. There recovery began by the mid-seventeenth century and slow growth followed. In the Valley of Mexico, an estimated preconquest population of between 2.9 and 1.5 million fell to about 325,000 by 1570. One of the Spaniards with Cortés, Bernardino Vázquez de Tapia, stated that more than a quarter of the population of Tenochtitlan died of smallpox during the siege. The Valley's population reached a low of about 70,000 in 1650 before rising to about 120,000 in the 1740s and 275,000 by 1800. New Spain as a whole followed in rough outline the demographic experience of the Valley of Mexico, with the Indian population increasing from its low point early in the seventeenth century to 3.7 million by the late eighteenth century.

The chronology experienced in the Yucatan was different from central Mexico. The native population of Yucatan had probably reached its apogee a century or more before the Spaniards arrived when a collapse of urban centers, wars, and various other calamities led to a decline in population. This decline accelerated as a result of the devastation of the Spanish conquest and the appearance of new diseases. The region's estimated population fell from perhaps 800,000 in 1528 to 240,000 by 1550 and 185,000 by 1605. A period of recovery ended about 1645 with another wave of diseases that reduced the population to a new low in 1740. After this date the region experienced strong population growth for the remainder of the colonial era.

Even before the first Spaniards entered Central America, plague and smallpox had been introduced along native trade routes, reducing the highland population by as much as a third. Scholars of this region estimate the original population at between 2.25 and 5 million in 1520. By 1570 the population had fallen to 500,000. Writing in 1532, one Spaniard noted that measles had "swept the land, leaving it totally empty [of Indians]."² Subsequent pandemics reduced the population further.

Peru also lost much of its indigenous population after the Europeans reached the New World. The first smallpox epidemic probably struck between 1524 and 1527. Estimating a population of about 9 million in 1520, Noble David Cook argued that the indigenous population fell to 1.3 million natives by 1570 and declined further to only 600,000 by 1630. The earliest demographic collapse occurred in the densely settled narrow coastal valleys. The lower-lying regions of the northern highlands also experienced extensive population losses. Dispersed populations of the mountain valleys proved more resistant to epidemics of typhus, smallpox, and measles sweeping through the region, although they suffered heavy losses as well. In contrast with the chronology for central Mexico, the native population of Peru did not reach its low point until the early eighteenth century. Recovery after 1720 raised the population by the mid-eighteenth century to around 610,000, roughly equal to what it had been a century earlier, and to about 700,000 in 1800.

Colombia's population followed a similar pattern. The proportion of natives in the province of Tunja in the eastern Andes fell about 80 percent from the mid-1530s to the mid-1630s. To the east, Venezuela's population dropped 50 to 75 percent. Ecuador's early population decline was precipitous, but recovery began by the end of the sixteenth century. Several lesser epidemics in the seventeenth century caused only temporary setbacks in the recovery. Modern scholars estimate that Brazil's Indian population in 1500 ranged from lows of from 1 to 1.5 million to highs of from 5 to 6 million. After developing population estimates for each identifiable group, John Hemming suggested a total population of about 2.4 million. As in Spanish America, a decline in the native population in Brazil followed the appearance of Europeans.

Flight and Forced Migration

The appalling drop in the native population is only one part of this complex story of cultural and social change. The flight and forced migrations of Indians from their lands also altered Latin America's demographic map during the colonial era. To escape the military depredations of the conquest, tens of thousands relocated to safer regions. This migration continued, and even accelerated in some places, with the establishment of Spanish and Portuguese settlements and the arrival of thousands of additional Europeans. As natives dispersed into the countryside, moving away from long-established indigenous centers that attracted the largest number of Europeans, religious conversion efforts and supplies of forced labor for the settlements were affected. Facing organizational and economic difficulties

associated with epidemics and migration, clerics and colonial officials sought to gather together the Indians in new or expanded and reorganized communities under more direct European supervision.

Spanish efforts to concentrate surviving Indian populations, called congregation or reduction, occurred in Central America in the 1540s, in Yucatan in the 1550s, and in central Mexico in two stages, first in the 1550s and later from 1593 to 1605. The process in each area followed similar patterns: Smaller outlying towns were combined with larger native communities, or separate towns or villages were joined in entirely new communities, with the original settlements then razed. Sometimes large Indian communities were moved to a nearby location with the buildings constructed in imitation of the characteristic Spanish grid pattern. These forced relocations made additional land available to Spaniards, even if there was no immediate rush to secure it.

In the 1560s initial efforts to concentrate indigenous populations that had survived the first waves of epidemic failed in Peru. Under the firm administration of Viceroy Francisco de Toledo, however, the resettlement or "reduction" of as many as 1.5 million Indians was imposed on southern Peru. Toledo sought to group the Indians into as few Spanish-style towns as possible. For example, over 200 existing villages in one region were consolidated into only 39 towns. In some cases as many as eighteen villages were telescoped into one. Repeated efforts were made to resettle the indigenous people of Huarochiri, who struggled to maintain their traditional lands. In the end the Spanish combined over one hundred small settlements into seventeen villages, each with about 1,000 to 1,700 residents. Nevertheless, within twenty years the people of this region had successfully reasserted their traditional residential patterns.

The Portuguese pursued similar policies in Brazil. The Jesuits actively promoted the resettlement of pacified Indian populations from small villages to larger mission communities, called *aldeias*, believing that this would facilitate Christian conversion and eliminate cultural practices such as cannibalism and polygyny. Under Portuguese Governor-General Mem de Sá, the number of *aldeias* went from two in 1557 to eleven, with a population of about 34,000, in 1562. The inadvertent effect of these forced relocations was to increase the Indians' vulnerability to epidemic diseases. After 1560 both bubonic plague and smallpox devastated Brazil. As a Jesuit leader put it, "The number of people who have died here in Bahia in the past twenty years seems unbelievable."³ Portuguese laws and colonial custom exacerbated the losses from disease by permitting colonial governors to assign Indians from villages supervised by clerics to settlers as forced laborers. In the end the *aldeias* proved unattractive to the Indians. One observer noted, "The Jesuits once governed more than fifty *aldeias* of these Christian Indians, but there are now no more than three."⁴

In response to these pressures and to the epidemics many natives moved voluntarily. Initiated by individuals, families, or sometimes larger groups, even villages, these migrations varied regionally in scale. In Yucatan, for example, these population movements seem to have been much larger than in central

Mexico, suggesting that the relative success of congregation in central Mexico resulted largely from the greater potential for coercion enjoyed by Spanish authorities near the colonial capital. Where Spanish power was weaker, as in Yucatan, Indians were able to maintain traditional elements of their social and economic structures. For example, over a third of the native population in Yucatan resided outside the congregated towns imposed by the Spanish. Many had, in fact, fled into unpacified areas to escape colonial controls. Some left the congregated towns for new, outlying settlements in the same region, putting distance between themselves and colonial authorities. Others moved away from their communities of birth to escape burdens imposed by traditional ethnic authorities. These strategies were all designed to provide a release, however temporary, from multiplying taxation and labor obligations exacerbated by the declining population.

Before the arrival of the Spanish in Peru the Inka had a hereditary class of laborers, *yanaconas*, who were exempt from traditional labor service. *Yanaconas* were not tied to a specific *kuraka*, community, or *ayllu* but had a special service relationship to the state. In colonial times Andean Indians who were allies of the Spanish or worked on their estates were identified as *yanas*, or *yanaconas*. More quickly Hispanicized than Indians who remained in traditional *ayllus*, *yanaconas* were tied to the emerging Spanish colonial economy, often finding employers far from their birthplace. The growth of this population accompanied Spanish impositions of tax and labor obligations that reduced the benefits associated with *ayllu* membership.

The *mita* was the most onerous obligation imposed on native peoples in the Andean region. The indigenous peoples had developed a reciprocal labor system, called the *mit'a*, long before the conquest. The Spanish forced Indian communities to provide labor on a rotational basis in mines, agriculture, textile factories, and other activities. The most infamous *mita* was designed to ensure a reliable annual labor pool of over 13,000 Indian men to work in the mines of Potosí alone. Drawing on the Indian communities closest to the mines, it required one seventh of the adult male population to work at Potosí for one year out of seven. The work was dangerous, and injuries and death were common. Despite these dangers, some Indians who performed *mita* service at Potosí chose to remain at the mines as wage laborers rather than returning to their homes. By its nature the *mita* led to substantial population dislocations in the southern highlands, since wives and children accompanied *mita* laborers to the mines. Eager to avoid *mita* service, thousands fled their homes, thereby surrendering traditional rights provided by membership in an *ayllu*. The number of *yanaconas* surged as a result.

A second category of voluntary migrants, the *forasteros*, expanded quickly at the same time. Spanish officials classified Indians who had moved away from their traditional *ayllus* to reside in other indigenous communities as *forasteros* (strangers or foreigners). Although these migrants lost their hereditary rights to farm *ayllu* land, they paid lower tribute payments and were exempted, like *yanaconas*,

from forced labor service in the *mita*. The growth in *yanacona* and *forastero* populations, coupled with recurrent epidemics, increased the pressure on those who remained in the *ayllu*, forcing many men to return to Potosí more often than every seven years. The costs were devastating. By the early 1680s the Indian population of Upper Peru had been reduced to roughly half of its level in 1570. Among those who survived, residency patterns and kinship ties had been transformed. In the sixteen provinces subject to the Potosí *mita*, half of the Indian population was classified as *yanacona* or *forastero*. In the fourteen neighboring provinces that were exempt from *mita* obligations, approximately three quarters of the population were classified as *forasteros*. The scale of this movement away from traditional *ayllu* membership suggests the terrible pressures of Spanish *mita* duties and tribute payments.

The Iberian Population

Population growth characterized demographic change in the Iberian population. Immigration accounted for the initial expansion. Soon, however, increased numbers of Iberian women in the colonies led to the natural growth of the population.

The number of emigrants from Spain to the Indies is unknown. Given the smaller number of ships sailing to the Indies beginning in the second quarter of the seventeenth century, it is probable that emigration decreased steadily from then until at least 1720. The number of European Spaniards arriving then rose again, although never to the level reached between 1550 and 1650.

Table 4.2 is based on information regarding ships sailing from Spain between 1506 and 1699. Although a few foreigners, mainly Portuguese, entered the Spanish colonies, the Crown always tried to regulate immigration and limit access to its own subjects. Protestants, descendants of Jews, *moriscos*, and gypsies were excluded by law from the Spanish Indies, but small numbers entered anyway.

Table 4.2 Estimate of Emigrants from Spain, 1506–1699

	PASSENGERS	SAILORS REMAINING IN AMERICA	TOTAL	AVERAGE PER YEAR
1506–60	56,935	28,736	85,671	1,558
1561–1600	104,910	52,272	157,182	3,930
1601–25	74,400	35,912	111,312	4,452
1626–50	54,640	28,864	88,504	3,340
1651–99	29,348	10,853	40,201	820
Totals	320,233	156,637	476,870	

SOURCES: MAGNUS MORNER, "SPANISH MIGRATION TO THE NEW WORLD PRIOR TO 1810: A REPORT ON THE STATE OF RESEARCH," IN *FIRST IMAGES OF AMERICA*, EDITED BY FREDI CHIAPELLI (BERKELEY AND LOS ANGELES: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS, 1976), VOL. 2, PP. 766–767; AND LUTGARDO GARCÍA FUENTES, *EL COMERCIO ESPAÑOL CON AMÉRICA (1650–1700)* (SEVILLE: ESCUELA DE ESTUDIOS HISPANO-AMERICANOS DE SEVILLA, 1980), CHAPTER 4.

Emigration

Little is known about the history of Portuguese emigration because the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 destroyed many records. In 1584, the pacified coastal region of Brazil had an estimated population of 57,000, of which whites, a group that must have been largely immigrant, numbered 25,000. By 1600, the total population is believed to have been 150,000, of which 30,000 were white. A century later an estimated 100,000 whites made up a third of the population of Brazil's settled areas. These estimates of the white population included substantial numbers of American-born whites and white and Indian mixtures, who because of their high status were considered white. Since fewer women left Portugal for Brazil than Spain for Spanish America, the natural increase of whites was also lower.

The Portuguese immigrated to Brazil to take advantage of the sugar and mining booms. Both events caused an increase in the total number of arrivals and in the number of emigrants from the middle and upper classes. In the early eighteenth century, perhaps 3,000 to 4,000 people left Portugal each year, primarily from the populous northern provinces, for the new mining regions of Brazil. Worried by the size of the exodus, in 1720 the Portuguese Crown tried, with some success, to restrict emigration.

Most of the first emigrants to the Spanish colonies were young men who joined the early expeditions of exploration, conquest, and settlement. By the middle of the sixteenth century, however, such adventure-hungry and unskilled young men were not encouraged to "go west." Instead, artisans and professional men, civil officials, clerics, servants and retainers, and women and children now swelled the ranks of emigrants. For the rest of the century the percentage of women almost doubled, with officials, clerics, their retinues, and skilled craftsmen also rising in number. Most of the emigrants came from Andalusia and Extremadura; by 1600 roughly one of every five males, two of every five females, and one of every two merchants hailed from the city of Seville alone.

Mexico attracted the largest number of settlers in the sixteenth century, over a third of the total. Peru and Upper Peru (Bolivia) together received about a quarter. The Antilles, New Granada, and Tierra Firme were destinations for another quarter of the emigrants, and the Río de la Plata and Central America accounted for just under a tenth. The remaining emigrants were spread throughout the other regions of the empire—Chile, Florida, Venezuela, and Ecuador.

The emigrants left Spain for a variety of reasons: Those who departed in the years of Columbus, Cortés, and Pizarro sought glory and fortune, but later emigrants had more mundane goals. Most hoped to escape the growing economic problems in Spain and Portugal. Many had relatives established in prosperous regions who wrote glowing accounts of life in the New World. Ties to family, in fact, were the main reason for emigration.

By 1600 the number of Spaniards born in the New World exceeded the number of recent arrivals. Between 1570 and 1620 the Spanish population roughly trebled, from perhaps 125,000 to 150,000 to around 400,000. About half of the growth is attributed to natural increase. With every generation the creole population's

proportion of the Spanish population in the Americas grew. The decline in Spanish emigration after 1625 meant that the number and proportion of peninsulars within the white population continued to fall.

Spanish and creole populations were distributed across the colonies unevenly, with the largest concentrations found in Mexico and Peru. By the mid-seventeenth century, there were 200,000 Spaniards and creoles in Mexico and another 350,000 in the rest of the colonies. These were not fixed populations. Many Spanish immigrants and poorer creoles moved from colony to colony, chasing brighter prospects. The discovery of rich mineral deposits in Mexico and Upper Peru in the sixteenth century attracted thousands of Spaniards from the Antilles, for example. The white population of Potosí in Upper Peru exploded after the discovery of silver, reaching 3,000 Spaniards and 35,000 creoles by 1610. As silver production fell in the late seventeenth century, however, the white population was reduced to a small minority of only 8,000.

The Spanish population was most numerous in and near the urban centers: Mexico City had 2,000 *vecinos* in the mid-sixteenth century and 3,000 by 1570, a number that continued to rise until the end of the colonial era, at which time about 70,000 Spaniards resided in the city. It is estimated that by the late eighteenth century just over half of the Spanish population of the Indies lived in urban areas.

Starting from a negligible number at the time of conquest, the population of Spanish descent had grown to almost a quarter of the total population by the 1790s. By that time as well, the number of racially mixed people had become increasingly visible.

The African Population

Blacks were present in large numbers in the Americas during the era of conquest and settlement. Thousands participated in the military campaigns against indigenous peoples. The majority of the earliest residents were the descendants of African slaves imported into Portugal and Spain during the fifteenth century. Most were slaves, although many managed to gain their freedom. The development of colonial economies coincided with the decline in the native population because of epidemics. The demand for labor could not be met from free immigration or from the small population of slaves in Iberia. As a result, Spain and Portugal began to send slaves to the Americas directly from Africa. Because Portugal controlled areas along Africa's Atlantic coast, the slave trade to Brazil quickly dwarfed imports to the Spanish colonies. Spurred by the early development of the sugar industry in the late sixteenth century and by a mining boom after 1695, Africans and their American-born descendants came to constitute the single largest component of the Brazilian population. During the sugar industry's expansion in the seventeenth century, the number of slaves imported to Brazil averaged about 5,600 per year. By 1810 more than 2.5 million African captives had arrived in Brazil. Despite the rising tide of slave imports, the growth of the black population of colonial Latin America was slowed by both the sexual imbalance in the slave trade and by high mortality rates. Because the purchasers of slaves preferred males to females,

approximately two males to one female were imported in the course of the trade. Moreover, extremely high mortality rates were found in the deadly disease environments of the tropical lowlands of the Caribbean Basin and Brazil, where the richest sugar plantations were located. As a result, the plantation areas depended on a steady flow of new African slaves, rather than natural increase, for labor.

New Ethnic Groups

By the end of the eighteenth century, people of mixed descent were an extremely important population group in colonial Latin America, having grown more rapidly than any other sector of the population. In 1580, when the permanent settlement of Buenos Aires established Spain's control of the Río de la Plata region, men of mixed descent, the sons of European fathers and Indian mothers, represented the majority of this "Spanish" settler population. Sexual relations between European men and Indian women were common from the early era of exploration. Indeed, according to R. C. Padden, the Spanish "commonly left more pregnancies in their camps than they did casualties on the field of battle."⁵ These relationships were seldom formal or long-lasting. Rape and other forms of coercion were common. But the prestige and military successes of European men in the New World led some indigenous families to seek relationships. Both Cortés and Pizarro had numerous relationships with Indian women and fathered mixed children, *mestizos*. Doña Marina, the famous Malinche, had a succession of Spanish partners.

Although some European men married Indian women, particularly in the early years when European women were very scarce in the colonies, few mixed children were legitimate according to the understandings of the time. Most were regarded as either "natural children" or illegitimates. In each case the child was born out of wedlock, but the birth status of illegitimates could never be improved because the marriage of the parents was prevented by close blood ties or because one or both were already married. Illegitimacy was a difficult stigma to overcome, but the status and behavior of the European father commonly determined the child's prospects. If a son or daughter had an ongoing relationship with a rich or powerful father, the mixed child was commonly included in European society, enjoying the father's social status. Indian mothers raised mixed children not acknowledged by their fathers in traditional culture. The status of the mixed population in the early decades of the colonies was complex and unpredictable. Some experienced discrimination, while others were able to obtain positions of responsibility and leadership. As this population grew and as the number of Spanish women in the colonies increased, the status of the *mestizo* population fell and became generally associated with illegitimacy. In Portuguese America this mixed population was called *mamelucos*, *mestiços*, or *caboclos*. In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the mixed population increased dramatically, playing a crucial role in enforcing Portuguese authority in the frontier zones and in protecting Brazil from French, and later Dutch, military interventions.

The arrival of Africans introduced a third ethnic group into the Americas. African slaves and their American-born descendants, both slave and free,

contributed to the growing complexity of New World identities. Very few Spanish or Portuguese residents of the colonies married black women. Less formal contacts, especially in the plantation zones where the slave population was concentrated, were common. Children born to slave mothers and white fathers, called *mulattos* or *pardos*, inherited the mother's legal condition, bondage, unless freed by the father. Africans and their descendants also established relationships with Indians. Most commonly these were between black men and Indian women. Offspring of these relationships were termed *zambos* in some regions but *mulattos* in others.

The consequence of relationships across ethnic boundaries was the rapid growth of a nonwhite, non-Indian population. Approximately 45 percent of the Spanish Empire's population of 14.1 million around 1800 was non-Indian and over 20 percent of it was *mestizo* or *pardo*. The term *casta* became the most common umbrella term in the Spanish colonies for any nonwhite who was not clearly an Indian.

The establishment of colonies by Spain and Portugal transformed the Americas demographically. Throughout the region Indian populations declined by up to 90 percent. In temperate climates, especially at higher altitudes, indigenous peoples experienced a modest recovery after the sixteenth century, but nowhere was the indigenous population as large in 1800 as it had been before the Europeans reached the New World. European populations increased as a result of both natural reproduction and, at least until the mid-seventeenth century, immigration. In the Caribbean islands and adjacent lowlands and in the lowlands of the Pacific slope, African slaves largely replaced the native populations that had been devastated by disease. Finally, these new populations of Europeans and Africans mixed with indigenous peoples and with each other, producing new American peoples and cultures. This mixed population expanded rapidly in the late sixteenth century and continued to increase its proportion of the total population of Latin America as the colonial era progressed.

INDIAN LABOR

The domestic and export economies of colonial Latin America rested largely on forced labor. Although supplemented over time by African slaves and a growing *casta* population, Indians provided the labor power that overcame Spain's limited capital resources and technology in developing mining and agriculture for the export market and agriculture, grazing, and textiles for the domestic market. Brazil's sugar plantations were well established by the mid-sixteenth century with the labor of Indian slaves. With the development of the African slave trade, they became less dependent on Indians, and by the early seventeenth century, the sugar plantations of Pernambuco and Bahia were worked mainly by African slaves.

Because the Indians rarely volunteered to work for the Iberian settlers, colonial officials evolved various forms of compulsory labor and fiscal demands to mobilize them. Depopulation, the separation of labor from goods as tribute, the conversion of goods into cash as tribute, and the compulsory purchase of goods

from Spanish officials all forced changes in the organization of labor. Indians were compelled to participate in the monetized colonial economy, an economy that overlapped but did not totally replace the indigenous one. The methods used to secure labor varied by region and over time. *Encomienda*, *repartimiento/mita*, free wage labor, *yanacónaje*, and slavery were the principal means employed in Spanish America. In Brazil, Indian slavery provided much of the agricultural labor initially, but from the 1570s planters increasingly relied on African slaves.

Encomienda

Both the Spanish Crown and individual Spaniards wanted to profit from their presence in the New World. With the exception of the Inka treasure, plunder produced only modest riches. But in Mesoamerica and the Andean region, urbanized, economically advanced societies were accustomed to providing agricultural surplus and labor as tribute to native overlords even before the conquest. The problem for the Crown and the conquistadors was how best to harness this labor power.

In the Caribbean, Spaniards employed an early form of *encomienda* as well as slavery to appropriate Indian labor. *Encomienda* Indians on Española were forcibly moved to the gold fields; subjected to outrageous demands for labor, food, and, in the case of women, sexual favors; and even sold. They were scarcely distinguishable from the enslaved natives imported from other islands and Tierra Firme. Faced with incontrovertible evidence of this excessive exploitation, Ferdinand issued the Laws of Burgos in 1512, the first systematic attempt to regulate the Spaniards' treatment of the Indians. Better work conditions, adequate food and living standards, and restrictions on punishment were among its many, although unenforced, provisions.

By the time the Spaniards reached Mexico, the allocation of Indians through *encomienda* was fixed in conquistadors' minds as an appropriate, if not indispensable, reward for their actions. Cortés, despite fearing a repetition of the demographic disaster he had witnessed in the islands, yielded to his followers' clamor and assigned them Indian *caciques* and their peoples. Grants of *encomienda*, often the most valuable spoil available, subsequently accompanied conquest in each region the Spaniards occupied.

The conquistadors and early settlers who received *encomiendas* constituted the colonial aristocracy for several decades. Their large households dominated city centers, and their rural enterprises tied the Indian communities to the marketplace. The *encomiendas* themselves varied enormously in size and value. The Crown confirmed Cortés in *encomiendas* totaling 115,000 natives, a statutory number probably far below those he actually held. Pizarro assigned himself 20,000 tributaries for his services in Peru. Thirty *encomiendas* in the Valley of Mexico in 1535 averaged 6,000 Indians each, far above the legal maximum of 300. More common than large awards, however, was the grant of a single *cacique* and his people.

Even in central New Spain and Peru, the number of *encomenderos* was never large. Only 506 *encomenderos* have been identified for New Spain from 1521 to 1555, by which time a number of *encomiendas* had reverted to the Crown. Peru

never had more than about 500 *encomenderos*, and by 1555 only 5 percent of an estimated Spanish population of 8,000 held Indians in *encomienda*.

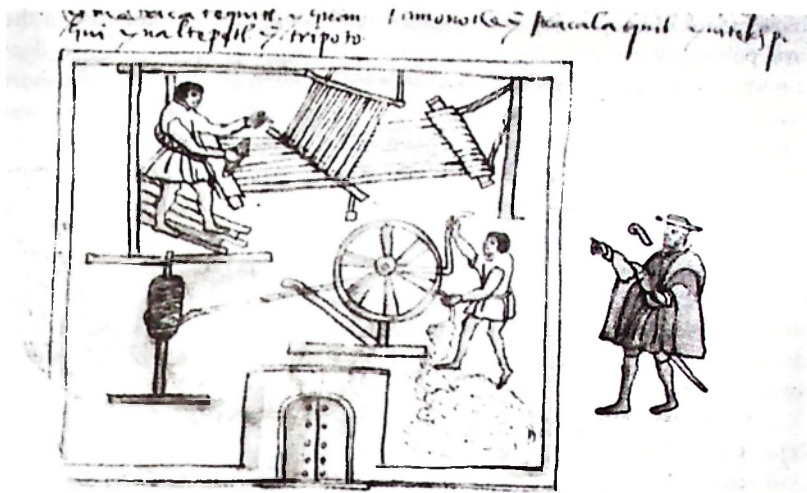
Initially the mainland *encomienda* supported essential elements of indigenous culture and economy. Except where precious metals were found, the *encomenderos'* demands were similar to those of the preconquest indigenous elites. The well-established patterns and the settled nature of the indigenous agricultural economies of central Mexico and Peru altered the labor practices of the Caribbean *encomienda*. In Española and Cuba, *encomenderos* routinely moved Indians to the gold mines, thus breaking the natives' ties to their lands. But even though Cortés, Pedro de Alvarado, and others forcibly enlisted Indians as military auxiliaries and porters, the *encomenderos* usually tried to profit from the existing indigenous economy. In comparison with the Caribbean experience, the *encomienda* in Mexico and Peru had a more settled character.

The small number of conquistadors and the administrative problems inherent in the tribute system forced reliance on indigenous leaders to serve as middlemen. The *kurakas* in Peru organized and supervised the delivery of labor and goods for sale and exchange in the urban centers where the *encomenderos* resided. The *kurakas* also acted as intermediaries for the *encomenderos* in efforts to limit or transform the tribute requirement. Indeed, the Andean tradition of mutual service may have mitigated the abuses that marked the behavior of the first generation of *encomenderos* in New Spain.

In central Mexico, the early *encomenderos* appeared to have learned nothing from their predecessors in the Antilles. They overworked the Indians, forcing them to construct buildings, provide labor for farms and mines, and transport goods. They seized the Indians' property and women and beat, jailed, and killed those who resisted. Some *encomenderos* sold the Indians' labor, whereas others pushed them off their land to introduce cash crops and grazing animals. The *caciques* and Indian nobles who required taxes on top of the *encomenderos'* demands added to the commoners' burden.

The *encomenderos'* central concern was income, and they made every effort to extract tribute goods that could be sold at a profit. Tribute payments varied, depending on local resources and skills. They were paid in cash or in foodstuffs, raw materials, and finished goods. One Mexican *encomienda* in the 1540s provided daily two chickens, fodder for horses, wood, maize, and, every eighty days, shirts, petticoats, and blankets. Depending on the region, *encomiendas* supplied cotton mantles, cacao, cochineal, llamas, wheat, and coca. Regardless of the monetary benefits of selling tribute goods, most *encomenderos* also demanded labor for service in their homes, on their rural properties, or in their workshops.

When the *encomenderos* could use the Indians' labor to enter the profitable export business, they altered the traditional economy. Hence, the *encomenderos* in Central America demanded cacao as tribute and became, in effect, cacao wholesalers for the large Mexican market. The *encomenderos* in Tucumán and Córdoba organized Indian men, women, and children to produce textiles for the growing market at Potosí after the discovery of silver there in 1545.



Two *encomienda* laborers are forced to work in a primitive textile *obraje*. Both the loom and the spinning wheel represent European technology transfers to the colonies.

The New Laws

The catastrophic native depopulation, the growing Spanish emigration, and the denunciation of the *encomenderos'* abuses came to a head in the 1540s. Correctly suspicious that the *encomenderos* wanted to become a New World version of the Castilian aristocracy, the Crown listened to colonists excluded from grants of *encomienda* and to a small, articulate group of clerics who condemned the *encomienda* as a major source of the ills suffered by the natives. The most effective lobbyist was the Dominican Bartolomé de las Casas, whose efforts led to the New Laws of 1542.

The New Laws authorized a viceroy for Peru and *audiencias* in Lima and Guatemala as part of their provisions to create a more effective administration and to improve the judicial system. But they are best known for prohibiting Indian slavery, attacking the *encomenderos* in general, and ordering in particular that individuals responsible for the civil war in Peru be stripped of their *encomiendas*. This last provision and one prohibiting new assignments of *encomiendas* and ordering the reversion of existing ones to the Crown upon the death of their incumbents angered the *encomenderos* and their supporters. The ensuing rebellion in Peru brought the death of the region's first viceroy, and in New Spain, a wiser viceroy, Antonio de Mendoza, refrained from the laws' enforcement rather than provoke rebellion.

Faced with the unexpectedly violent reaction, the Crown relented, and by allowing succession for a second "life," it enabled the *encomenderos* to pass on their grants for another generation. But ironically, as a result of the civil wars and the

frequent lack of heirs, many of the *encomiendas* had already become part of the royal patrimony and provided tribute to the royal treasury, tribute whose collection was overseen by royally appointed *corregidores*, who were named for a short term rather than for life. The slow transfer of *encomiendas* from private to royal domain meant a shift in power away from the original colonial aristocracy in central Mexico and Peru. Before 1570 about three quarters of the *encomienda* income in the Valley of Mexico had reverted to the Crown, and so extensions of *encomiendas* for third and fourth lives had little significance. *Encomiendas* and other types of labor services and tribute in kind did survive in Paraguay, Yucatan, remote areas of Central America, New Granada, Chile, and northwestern Argentina until the late eighteenth century. Although essential to these areas' economies, their size and value were not important enough to the Crown to make their complete suppression necessary.

Repartimiento/Mita

As direct control of the *encomiendas* passed into the hands of colonial officials, the Indian communities increasingly were required to substitute cash tributes for the earlier payments in kind, although this transition was never completed. For tributaries to meet annual payments of up to eight pesos, they had to produce goods for the market and work for wages. In the areas near the major Spanish towns and the mining camps of New Spain and Peru, wage labor and market agriculture thus became a fixture of the Indians' lives. Elsewhere, however, the natives participated less in the money economy. But by 1600, Indian communities throughout much of the empire had reorganized to meet the monetary requirements of the colonial state and the Church as well as to satisfy new needs associated with the assimilation of the European material culture.

Neither cash tribute nor the desire to work for wages to subsidize the purchase of nonsubsistence goods drew enough Indians away from their traditional production to provide the amount of cheap labor demanded by Spanish landowners, miners, and textile manufacturers. In addition, the diminished Indian population that survived the early epidemics often lived far from the new economic centers, particularly the mining regions of Mexico and Peru. Thus large numbers of Indian laborers had to be relocated.

The solution to this problem was a system of rotational labor drafts, called *repartimiento* in New Spain and *mita* in Peru. Compulsory labor service had been common in both the Aztec and Inka empires, and Spaniards had used it from the beginning of the colonial period for the construction of roads, aqueducts, fortifications, churches, and public buildings, and for some agricultural purposes. Formal *repartimiento/mita* drafts were established in New Spain in the 1550s, the central Andes in the 1570s, and the eastern highlands of Colombia in the 1590s. Under this system the Indian communities filled a quota of laborers for a prescribed time, usually two to four months of the year. The workers then could apply the minimal wages they received to their tribute and other required payments.

This labor system differed according to region. In New Spain the *repartimiento* supplied labor mainly for agriculture, although silver miners also used it in central Mexico. The *mita* was the labor base for the early Peruvian mining industry, on coastal plantations, and for road repair and maintenance projects. In Quito and Tucumán, labor in textile factories (*obrajes*) was a common form of *repartimiento* service. In Central America, *repartimientos* provided labor for wheat farming and indigo production. Their use in the latter activity was illegal, but both the producers and royal administrators came to regard the small fines as part of the labor cost. In Oaxaca, where Indians were assigned primarily to Spanish wheat farmers, the *repartimiento* made up only about 4 percent of all tributaries.

The most important manifestation of this system of forced labor was imposed on the indigenous peoples of the southern Andes. The discovery of rich silver deposits at Potosí created an enormous need for labor, and Indians were compelled to work from the beginning in the 1540s. However, the initial system had been undermined by competition among Spanish miners and by various strategies of resistance evolved by indigenous communities. In 1572 Viceroy Toledo transformed the *mita* to provide an annual labor draft of roughly 13,000 Indians for the mines of Potosí. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was common for Indians assigned to the Potosí *mita* to purchase an exemption by paying the equivalent cash payment of a wage laborer. As the silver played out miners increasingly took the cash as income. The historical labor burden of Andean communities, a system that began as reciprocal obligations within the *ayllu*, had become the forced transfer of wealth from poor Indians to rich Spaniards.

In some regions the *repartimiento/mita* remained an important mechanism for mobilizing Indian labor until the end of the colonial era. The mining *mitas* in Peru, the *repartimiento* for textile *obraje* labor in Ecuador, and the agricultural *repartimiento* in Central America survived into the nineteenth century. In central New Spain, the *repartimiento* was important to agriculture for less than a century, but in the north, in New Galicia, this system continued to supplement free labor until the early eighteenth century.

Free Wage Labor

The continuing decline of the native population and the growth of the Spanish population rendered the *repartimiento* an inadequate source of labor for agricultural and mining production. Large estate owners (*hacendados*) and miners in central New Spain solved the need for a regular supply of labor by contracting directly with Indians and *castas*, often paying wages slightly higher than those paid for *repartimiento* labor. Originally a supplement to *repartimiento* labor, in time free wage labor replaced it. Indians who lost their lands through sale or usurpation and those who found the financial demands of their village unbearable formed a pool of labor available for hire and, in some cases, for permanent residence on the *haciendas*.

By 1630 free wage labor had largely supplanted *repartimiento* in New Spain, and the number of *hacienda* residents, often *castas*, was expanding. The forced

labor draft remained in use in the Valley of Mexico only for the interminable project of draining Lake Texcoco. By the late sixteenth century in Peru and Upper Peru, free wage labor was more prevalent than *mita* labor in the mining districts. In Chilean agriculture, free wage labor became important in the mid-seventeenth century, and a century later it was widespread in Ecuador and the eastern highlands of Colombia. Throughout Spanish America, powerful landowners and mine owners were able to control the cost of labor and keep wages at artificially low levels. Wage earners may have been free, but a true labor market seldom existed.

An outgrowth of free wage labor was debt peonage. *Hacendados*, miners, and owners of *obrajes* sought to hold workers in debt to prevent them from moving to another job. For their part, the laborers sometimes demanded credit before accepting employment. In many cases, neither creditor nor debtor expected ever to settle the account.

Debt peonage associated with free wage labor varied greatly by region. It was common throughout New Spain, where the amount of debt ranged from averages of fewer than three weeks to eleven months of work. The extent of debt peonage varied over time as well, remaining generally constant in Morelos in the eighteenth century but eroding in Guadalajara owing to the workers' weakened bargaining power as a result of demographic expansion. Debt peonage seems to have been more widespread in Ecuador than in Mexico and less prevalent on the coastal estates of Peru, but on the Jesuit estates in Tucumán, its use to tie down workers was routine. In Chile, peonage eventually took the form of *inquilinaje*, or land loans.

Indian Slavery

The progression from *encomienda* to *repartimiento/mita* to free wage labor and at times debt peonage—the classic pattern of labor institutions in Spanish America—appeared first and was achieved most fully in New Spain, but one or more stages could be found across the colonies. During times of economic transition distinct labor systems coexisted or competed in close proximity. For example, in early New Spain, African slaves who served as foremen on rural estates supervised some *encomienda* laborers. And, in the early eighteenth century, *mita* laborers in the silver mines of Potosí worked alongside free wage laborers and slaves. Two other Indian labor systems, Indian slavery and *yanacónaje*, were significant to the early development of colonial economies.

Chattel slavery was the most repressive form of Indian labor in the early colonial period. Where mineral wealth and surplus agricultural production were absent, enslaving the natives rather than assigning them to *encomienda* proved more attractive to Spaniards eager for immediate profit. Thousands of Indians in the Caribbean had been enslaved by the first generation of settlers. Despite reservations, the Crown accepted the enslavement of Indians, notably those who refused to acknowledge its authority and submit peacefully. Under pressure from the Spanish colonists, some native *caciques* enslaved free Indians. As the Indian population declined on Española, Spanish adventurers sought captives on neighboring islands. Once defined as slaves, Indian captives were bought and sold as chattel.

Forms of forced labor viewed by the Spaniards as slavery were common in Mesoamerica before the conquest. Informants told the Spanish that natives fought to capture slaves for labor or sacrifice. In addition, thieves, rapists, and poachers, among others, could be sentenced to enslavement for crimes. This tradition provided a convenient justification for the expansion of even harsher forms of slavery by the Spaniards. During the conquest of Central America captives were commonly branded and divided among Spaniards as booty. A lively trade in Indian slaves expanded across the region because of the demand for native labor elsewhere. Nicaragua's principal economic activity in the 1530s was enslaving Indians, who were then sent to Panama and Peru. There is no agreement on the number of slaves shipped out of Central America, but estimates range from 50,000 to hundreds of thousands forcibly exported between 1524 and 1549. Depopulation and the Crown's attack on the mistreatment of Indians in the New Laws brought slavery to an end by 1550 in Central America, however. Alonso López de Cerato, named to preside over the recently established *audiencia* for much of Central America (Los Confines), reached the region in 1548 and implemented the new prohibitions on holding native slaves, much to the dismay of numerous colonists and traders. Spanish slave raids continued on the Venezuelan coast until the early seventeenth century, and native enslavement persisted on the northern New Spain frontiers until the early eighteenth century. In Chile and northern Argentina the enslavement of Indians was an ongoing part of frontier warfare well into the eighteenth century.

The enlarged Portuguese presence after 1530 worsened the labor problem in colonial Brazil. Despite Jesuit protests, slaving expeditions became commonplace as the expanding sugar industry required more laborers. The theory behind the expansion of slavery in Brazil was similar to that in Spanish America. "Just war," cannibalism, and the ransom of Indians captured by other natives in intertribal war in return for lifetime servitude were acceptable justifications for enslavement. With the demonstrated profitability of sugar the numbers of Indian slaves rose, reaching approximately 9,000 on the sugar plantations of Bahia alone.

The coastal Indian population fell as a result of enslavement, increased warfare, and, beginning in 1562, the spread of disease. The slave traders then moved into Brazil's immense interior. By 1600, formal slaving expeditions (*bandeiras*) were becoming more frequent. Slavers from São Paulo, the famous *bandeirantes*, scoured much of south and central Brazil in the seventeenth century looking for Indians to capture and enslave. Jesuit missions, even in the Spanish colony of Paraguay, were particularly attractive targets, and the *bandeirantes* seized thousands of Indians from them in the early decades of the century. Although slaving expeditions continued in the interior until the mid-eighteenth century, the captured Indians were sent mainly to Rio de Janeiro, São Vicente, and São Paulo. On the sugar plantations of Pernambuco and Bahia in the northeast, African slaves had begun to replace Indian slaves in the 1570s, and by the 1620s the transition was nearly complete. However, Indian slavery persisted on Brazil's frontiers until the

1750s and illegally thereafter in a few areas. But by that time African slavery had long been the most important source of labor on Brazil's plantations.

Yanaconaje

In the Inka Empire individuals unattached to *ayllus* were called *yanaconas*. Growing in number even before Atahualpa's capture, the disruption of the Spanish conquest and the demands of the mining *mita* increased the number of uprooted natives. Spanish landowners willingly allowed them to settle on their estates in return for specified amounts of labor and produce. Among the benefits of this relationship, *yanaconas* were exempt from the *mita* and paid tribute at a lower rate. By 1600 the number of *yanaconas* was nearly equal to that of Indians who remained in traditional *ayllus* in Peru and Upper Peru. As the system matured it was known as *yanaconaje*.

Most *yanaconas* were tied to Spanish agricultural estates, where they received some land for their own use in return for labor. Over time these *yanaconas* became rooted on a particular Spanish estate, a type of bound labor. Colonial bills of sale suggest that this dependent condition was enduring. Although *yanaconas* were not legal chattel, like slaves who could be bought and sold, they were often included with the estate on which they resided when it changed hands. Thus labor, as well as land, passed from owner to owner. One Indian complained to a Spanish bishop, "My employer has held me in his power and in servitude since my birth, more than twelve years ago, simply because my parents were his *yanaconas* and I was born on his *hacienda*."⁶ During this same period, silver miners also attracted *yanaconas* to Potosi. The rapid growth in the number of *yanaconas* in Peru led Viceroy Toledo to remove their exemption from tribute and to order them to remain in their current residence. This decision reinforced the *yanaconas*' status as a workforce tied to specific locations or estates. This relative lack of mobility distinguished *yanaconaje* from other "free" labor systems. By 1600 the number of *yanaconas* was almost equal to that of Indians retaining traditional land rights in Peru and Upper Peru. Versions of the institutions were retained in northwestern Argentina into the seventeenth century and, under the name *originarios*, in Paraguay into the 1790s. In some places *yanaconaje* persisted after independence.

Repartimiento de Bienes and Indian Resistance

Although the Spanish employed different forms of native labor, their purpose was always to convert labor into cash profit. Many Indians participated reluctantly in an inadequately integrated colonial economy with limited opportunities to earn the cash often necessary to meet tribute demands, pay religious fees, and purchase raw materials and finished goods. Over time the Spaniards devised a system of credit that enabled Indians to obtain needed items and even to obtain cash loans on the one hand while it provided substantial profit for participating officials and their merchant backers on the other. The *repartimiento* or *reparto de bienes* or *mercancías* reached maturity in the late seventeenth century and continued even after outlawed in the 1780s. Under this system, *corregidores* and *alcaldes mayores*

effectively monopolized commerce between the Indians in their jurisdiction and the outside by providing raw materials on credit and then purchasing the finished goods—cochineal in Oaxaca, coca in the *yungas* of Upper Peru, textiles in Quito—at low fixed prices that included the interest on the advances. Similarly, the officials made available on credit a variety of animals and consumer goods—mules and textiles were the most common in the Andes—at elevated prices that again reflected built-in high rates of interest and profit. The *corregidores'* judicial authority to collect debts gave them the security to sell on credit, although their abuse of this power provoked resistance that, in its extreme form, became rebellion. The ultimate effect of the *repartimiento de bienes* system was to create a permanent trade imbalance in the Indian communities that only native wage labor could make up.

Indians resisted labor demands in any way they could. Some fled their homes, surrendering their traditional right to land but retaining control over their lives. Sometimes indigenous chieftains refused to cooperate and were imprisoned or lost their positions as a consequence. Local rebellions were common, notably in the Andes. Spanish authorities routinely responded to such challenges with force, beating, imprisoning, and occasionally even execution. Rarely able to improve their conditions through force, the Indian communities quickly learned to use the colonial legal system, which included courts designated for their cases. For example, they could hire lawyers and initiate suits to win a smaller *mita* quota or the payment of their statutory wages. Although these victories were often costly and seldom lasted, the Indians' resourcefulness and persistence were remarkable.

Spanish demands for labor and the commercial requirements of the colonial economy often severed the close relationship between the natives and their land. The need to meet tribute payments, serve in labor drafts, and pay for goods made available and, at times, imposed upon them by the *repartimiento de bienes* forced Indians from their villages and into the Hispanic culture. The transformation of Indian culture, however, was never complete. The Indians continued to resist the commercialization of their labor and production long after the Spanish Empire had collapsed.

SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE TRADE

Before the Portuguese voyages of discovery in the early fifteenth century, slavery in Western Europe had declined from its prominence in the latter stages of the Roman Empire to a marginal place in European social and economic life. But the Portuguese traders' explorations of Africa's Atlantic coast introduced them to the continent's indigenous slave trade, and by 1450 hundreds of African slaves were entering Europe each year. This flow seems to have peaked at about 500 per year in the 1480s and then remained constant into the next century. Thus, by the time that Columbus sailed, African slavery was well established in Iberia.

Slavery moved much closer to the legal and structural form it took in America when Portugal and Spain began to develop the Atlantic islands. The introduction

of sugar cultivation from the eastern Mediterranean to Madeira and the Canary Islands hastened the adaptation of Iberian institutions and social forms to the special requirements of a colonial economic environment. Because these islands lacked an adequate labor force, sugar cultivation was linked to the African slave trade almost immediately. This stage in the development of slavery culminated in the Portuguese settlement of São Tomé. Located close to the African coast, it became the prototype of the plantation colony relying on heavy capital investment, monoculture, and a workforce of African slaves.

Early African Slavery

Epidemic disease and a growing preference for black workers among Spanish and Portuguese settlers produced a ready market for African slaves. Indeed, investing in imported slaves proved to be a sound financial decision for many colonial miners and sugar planters. Over time, the owners of Brazilian sugar plantations, for example, came to rely on African slaves. Nonetheless, it was primarily native labor that supported colonial enterprise in many parts of Latin America. *Encomienda*, *repartimiento*, and *mita* required little capital investment and had the added benefit of compelling native communities to provide the subsistence and maintenance of the workers. African slavery therefore prospered where diminished Indian populations could no longer sustain these alternative forms of forced labor. In the wake of staggeringly high indigenous mortality rates, the use of African slaves in agriculture spread from the Caribbean to the tropical lowlands of the Caribbean Basin and Brazil, sustaining the production of tobacco, cacao, indigo, and, of course, sugar.

Sugar cultivation was introduced in Española in the early sixteenth century, but the product's full potential in the New World was first realized in Brazil when the plantation model developed in the Atlantic islands took hold in the second half of the sixteenth century. In the early Spanish period Genoese merchants provided much of the capital and black slaves most of the labor. After the conquests of the Aztec and Inka empires, large numbers of Spaniards abandoned the older settlements of the Caribbean to seek their fortunes in Mexico and Peru. Shorn of investment capital and manpower, the islands could not compete successfully with the well-established Portuguese sugar estates of the Atlantic islands or the emerging production of Brazil.

Slavery was used successfully in the early mining industry in the mainland colonies. Placer mining with Indian labor had produced much of the mineral wealth extracted from Española before 1520, and many early settlers in Central America had prior experience in this industry. Initially, the *encomienda* and enslaved Indians formed the labor gangs in the gold-mining industry in Honduras and Guatemala, but high levels of mortality among native laborers drove the miners to import expensive black slaves. Several major gold strikes provided the necessary capital, and by the 1540s slaves were arriving in substantial numbers, eventually reaching 3,000. When profits fell, however, Central America's miners sold their African slaves to settlers in wealthier regions, like Peru, returning to the

use of cheaper Indian labor. Although approximately 5,000 slaves worked in the silver mines in Potosí around 1600, African slaves were much more important to the gold-mining industry. Officials in Ecuador repeatedly asked to import slaves to work the region's gold mines, disingenuously suggesting this was good for the Africans: "The blacks would not be harmed; in fact it would be a service to them to be taken from Guinea, from that fire and tyranny and barbarity and brutality where without law and without God they live as savage brutes."⁷

The African Slave Trade

Spain had surrendered its right to establish outposts in Africa by the Treaty of Alcaçovas in 1479. Consequently it developed a system of monopoly contracts, *asientos*, with foreign merchants, usually Portuguese, to supply its American colonies with slaves. To secure the maximum fiscal benefit for itself and to prevent contraband trade, beginning in 1518 the Crown sold exclusive licenses to private enterprises, individuals, or monopoly companies to import into the colonies a set number of *piezas de Indias*, young adult males or their labor equivalent, within a limited number of years. Since women, children, and older or disabled men counted as fractions, a ship delivering 100 *piezas de Indias* could actually unload 200 or more slaves. Because the *asientista* usually earned greater profits from the introduction of contraband goods, few fulfilled their obligation to import a full quota of African slaves. The *asiento* bid up the cost of slaves, and the fleet system impeded efforts to market in Europe Spanish colonial plantation goods produced by slave labor.

By 1820 Spanish America had received 1.4 million African slaves. Table 4.3 reveals that the period 1761–1820—a time of dramatic expansion in the production of sugar and other tropical products—was also the time of greatest volume in the slave trade. The burgeoning sugar plantations of Cuba and, until 1810, the growing economies of Venezuela and the Río de la Plata region attracted a rising tide of increased slave imports during these years. Overall, however, the Spanish colonies received less than 50 percent of the slaves imported by Brazil. Brazil and the Caribbean sugar colonies of France and Great Britain were the preeminent destinations. British North America, in comparison, imported slightly fewer than 350,000 slaves, a small fraction of the slave trade.

An overwhelming majority of the slaves taken to America were from West Africa. On small islands off the coast and in fortified trading posts, the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English maintained trading stations and exchanged manufactured goods, rum, and tobacco for the slaves offered by African middlemen. European merchants preferred young adult males because women, children, and older men cost the same to ship but sold at lower prices. In addition, African sellers were more reluctant to sell women, for they were vital in African agriculture and highly valued in the Saharan slave trade with the Muslims. The resulting permanent sex imbalance of two males to one female in the trade undermined the slaves' potential for family life and retarded the natural increase of the New World slave population. Colonial planters sometimes expressed preferences for slaves

Table 4.3 Slave Imports to Colonial Latin America Including Inter-Colonial Trade to 1820

	TOTAL IMPORTS		AVERAGE PER YEAR	
	SPANISH AMERICA	BRAZIL	SPANISH AMERICA	BRAZIL
Pre-1581	84,900	4,100	N/A	N/A
1581–1640	473,677	232,623	7,895	3,877
1641–1700	187,810	509,411	3,130	8,490
1701–1760	248,234	1,056,400	4,137	17,607
1761–1820	407,330	1,637,524	6,789	27,292
TOTAL	1,401,951	3,440,058	5,842	14,334

NOTE: THE ESTIMATES HAVE BEEN ADJUSTED TO REFLECT REEXPORTS OF SLAVES AMONG THE COLONIES OF THE AMERICAS. THAT IS, THE ESTIMATES REFLECT BOTH THE ATLANTIC SLAVE AND REEXPORTS AMONG NEW WORLD COLONIES. ESPECIALLY NOTEWORTHY IS THE REEXPORT OF 129,642 SLAVES FROM BRAZIL TO SPANISH COLONIES.

SOURCE: ALEX BORUCKI, DAVID ELTIS, AND DAVID WHEAT, "ATLANTIC HISTORY AND THE SLAVE TRADE TO THE SLAVE TRADE IN SPANISH AMERICA," *AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW*, 120:2 (APRIL, 2015, 440); "NOTES ON THE ESTIMATES OF THE INTRA-AMERICAN SLAVE TRADE TO THE SPANISH AMERICAS," [HTTP://WWW.SLAVEVOYAGES.ORG/DOCUMENTS/DOWNLOAD/NOTES_INTRA-AMERICAN_TRADE.DOCX](http://www.slavevoyages.org/documents/download/notes_intra-american_trade.docx) (ACCESSED 11-1-2017).

from a specific African region because certain cultures had reputations for hard work or docility—the two characteristics the owners valued most. Yet problems in organizing the African side of the trade prevented a systematic effort to meet these demands: Traders took slaves from wherever they were plentiful and cheap, and planters bought those who were available.

Brazil was the first American colony to introduce sugar agriculture on a large scale. After a succession of epidemics devastated the supply of forced Indian labor, the planters of the northeast coastal zone turned to black slavery as an alternative labor source, and by the 1620s they relied on it almost entirely. Portuguese traders who dominated the African slave trade to Europe responded quickly to the growing Brazilian market. Also, the proximity of Africa reduced transportation costs and the number of slave deaths in transit. The consequence of these advantages can best be seen in a comparative context.

During the seventeenth century, almost as many slaves entered Brazil alone as entered Spanish America and the French and British sugar colonies combined. Even in the eighteenth century, when the Caribbean's sugar production grew most rapidly, the Portuguese colony continued its dominance in the Atlantic slave trade. Although the total imports of the French and British Caribbean colonies were greater, no other nation's colonies imported as many slaves as did Brazil. By 1810 more than 2.5 million slaves had entered Brazilian ports.

Estimates of slave imports to the Americas tend to disguise the trade's effects on Africa and obscure its dreadful nature. Tens of thousands of Africans died even before arriving in Africa's slave ports. Thousands perished in the wars and civil unrest that the slave trade helped promote. Travel in crowded and pestilential ships claimed the lives of tens of thousands more Africans. The Caribbean sugar boom in the eighteenth century created a heavy new demand for slaves, and



The slave market in Pernambuco, Brazil.

inhuman conditions and the resulting high mortality became even more common in the slave ships plying the Atlantic. In an extreme case, only 98 of the 594 slaves embarked on the *George* in West Africa in 1717 reached Buenos Aires alive. Overall, between 1 and 2 million men, women, and children—more than 10 percent of all slaves leaving Africa—died in transit. Probably almost half as many blacks died violently in Africa as a result of the trade or on board ships as reached Brazil and Spanish America alive.

How profitable was the Atlantic slave trade? Some historians have argued that the profits from the trade and slave-based agriculture in the Americas played a central role in the development of modern capitalism. Others have claimed that the overall profit level of the trade was generally low and that many investors lost money. Common sense suggests that the trade would not have persisted for several centuries unless profits were fairly secure. The best estimates currently available indicate that profits averaged between 5 and 6 percent of invested capital during most of the time that the trade was legal. Nevertheless, many participants in the trade lost money, and some went bankrupt, including some of the most heavily capitalized monopoly companies. High profit levels were not uncommon, but the terrible mortality experienced on some slave ships and the unpredictability of slave prices in the New World limited profit levels over the long term.

The trade to Brazil was less limited by bureaucratic restrictions and, apparently, was more dependably profitable. Brazilians themselves participated in the trade throughout the sugar boom. Although profitable in the long run, the slave trade's earnings were more modest than some early commentators alleged, and

individual voyages often brought losses. In the broad context of the expanding Atlantic commercial network, however, the slave trade unquestionably promoted the growth of European economic activity and the development of specialized export economies.

Plantation Slavery

The scale and periodization of the African slave trade were tied to the development of plantation agriculture. The sugar plantation more than any other part of the colonial economy rested on slave labor. Regional cycles of growth and decline in the production of sugar caused by soil exhaustion, new technologies, or political events elevated or depressed the demand for African slaves across the Americas. From the sixteenth century to the early nineteenth century Portuguese Brazil, French Saint Domingue (Haiti), and Spanish Cuba each dominated sugar production and served as the primary destination of the slave trade. Despite the central importance of sugar to the institution of slavery, large numbers, perhaps a majority, of slaves worked in occupations other than those in the cane fields. Black slaves worked on estates that grew indigo, tobacco, and cacao; in urban crafts such as tailoring, shoemaking, carpentry, blacksmithing, and bricklaying; and as stevedores, cowboys, and street vendors. In seventeenth-century Lima, for example, documents identify the African slaves Antón Mina as a journeyman bricklayer and Lázaro Criollo as a cobbler.

Plantations varied greatly in size and number of slaves. Most plantations of the Brazilian sugar zone had between sixty and one hundred slaves in the early seventeenth century, a number similar to that on an average plantation in the Old South of the United States during the cotton boom in the nineteenth century. In contrast, the sugar plantations of the French and British Caribbean in the eighteenth century typically had hundreds of slaves, and holdings of 500 to 1,000 were not unknown. During the Cuban sugar boom after 1795, planters often imitated the slave holdings found earlier in the French and English islands. In the Brazilian case, the smaller slave holdings are explained by the limited capital resources available to Portuguese planters, relative to the French, for example, and by the slowdown of Portuguese commercial activity after 1650.

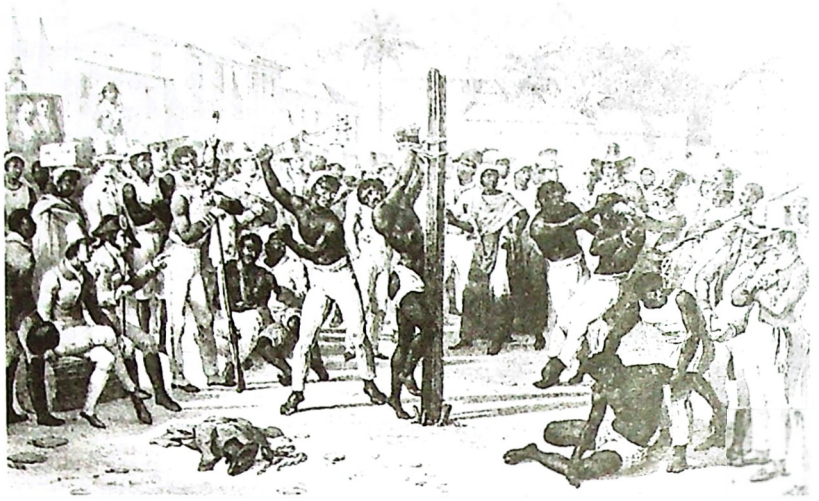
Slaves in Brazil lived in very difficult conditions. Most commonly slave quarters consisted of small mud-walled or thatched huts or, in the largest estates, single-story barrack-like buildings. When possible, slaves sought to erect dividers to provide some privacy for family life. Interiors were nearly bare, with the exception of rough mattresses or hammocks. Slave owners kept their expenditures for slave clothing to a minimum. Some seventeenth-century visitors to the sugar region referred to the nakedness of the slaves. Owners distributed clothing, or more commonly cloth for the slaves to make their own clothing, once a year. Men usually worked dressed only in a pair of pants that came to just below the knee. Slave women dressed modestly in skirt, blouse, and bodice. Children, especially young children, received the barest minimum of clothing. Few rural slaves had shoes, although rough, homemade sandals were common.

Many slaves suffered the health effects of a poor diet. The comments of foreign visitors to Brazil as well as those made by royal officials and priests suggest that many, if not a majority, of plantation slaves went hungry. Portuguese colonial authorities even attempted to force plantation owners to raise enough food crops to feed their slaves. As the slave system matured, most slave owners provided garden plots that allowed slaves to supplement their rations. However, many slaves could tend their plots only on Sundays or after long days laboring in their masters' fields. Slaves also supplemented their ration by theft from plantation fields or the nearby farms of free farmers.

Despite these harsh material conditions and the demanding work schedule of the plantations, slaves formed families and raised children. Colonial Brazil recorded the highest number of legal marriages among the slave regions of Latin America, and less formal, long-term stable relations were even more common. The sex ratio imbalance in the slave trade and the conditions experienced on the plantations may have slowed family formation and lowered birthrates in the sixteenth century, but by the eighteenth century the birthrate among slaves born in Brazil was normal and the majority of Afro-Brazilians were native-born. Portuguese law provided some protection for slave marriages. The marriage rate for slaves was lower than that of the free population, and the highest rates were found on larger plantations. The ability of owners to separate husbands and wives through sales was very limited. Similar protection was not provided to parents, and it was not uncommon for children to be sold away from parents, especially when an owner died and sales were required to divide an estate among heirs.

Given the oppression of their captivity and the grim nature of their living conditions, it is not surprising that slaves struggled to gain some control over their lives. Most commonly slaves tried to limit their masters' claims on their labor by feigning illness, breaking machinery and tools, killing livestock, or simply refusing to work efficiently. Thousands ran away. In many cases runaways stayed near the plantation and sought through intermediaries to gain some advantage, such as better food or a better job. Fear that runaways were a threat to public order led Spanish authorities to impose harsh punishments. The law in Upper Peru stated, "The absence of a slave from his master's house for more than 4 days will result in a punishment of 50 lashes, after which the captive will be placed in stocks for public exhibit. . . . [I]f absent for more than 8 days he will receive 100 lashes and wear a 12 lb. leg iron."⁸ Very often the fact that a slave was a chronic runaway was acknowledged in a bill of sale, stating for example that the slave was a "thief and runaway" or "ill disciplined and missing."

A smaller number of slaves escaped completely, forming free communities, or *quilombos* (called *palenques* in Spanish colonies), in remote areas, and often forming informal alliances with local Indians. By the 1670s there were as many as 20,000 runaways in Brazil, perhaps half of them living in organized groups. Palmares in Alagoas was the largest Brazilian *quilombo*, holding out against punitive expeditions for decades before being destroyed in 1697. Runaway communities were also common in the Spanish colonies. Mexico, New Granada, Ecuador, and Venezuela



Masters often arranged with civil authorities to punish slaves in public places. These brutal punishments were intended to intimidate the slave population and emphasize the power of masters. This scene is from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. As the whip is applied to a slave tied to the pillory, we can see another slave being forced forward for his punishment. In the right foreground a slave recently cut down from the pillory is supported in the arms of his friend.

all had large and long-lived *palenques*. In some cases, the Spanish authorities were forced to negotiate treaties that recognized the escaped slaves' freedom. One common condition negotiated with these communities was their agreement to pursue and return other slave runaways.

In contrast with Brazil, the mature plantation complex did not develop in the Spanish colonies until the late eighteenth century, when Cuba emerged as a major sugar producer. Spanish settlers used slaves in agriculture on the mainland from an early date—principally along the Caribbean coast in the production of cacao, indigo, and sugar. In Central America the expansion of indigo production in the eighteenth century was closely tied to the importation of slave labor. Although sugar estates in Mexico and Peru used slaves as the primary agricultural labor force, slavery was less common in these mainland colonies than in Brazil for two reasons. First, silver and gold mines drained risk capital, and slave labor, away from tropical export agriculture. Second, Spanish commercial regulations, including trade monopolies and the cumbersome fleet system, limited access to European consumers and thus potential profit.

Urban Slavery

Slavery had a more urban character in Spanish America than in Brazil. As a result of the slower development of plantation crops, a higher percentage of African slaves delivered to Spanish colonial ports spent their lives in urban settings. There

they worked as manual laborers, household servants, skilled artisans, street vendors, and in a multitude of other occupations. Slaves constituted between 10 and 25 percent of the populations of Caracas, Buenos Aires, Havana, Lima, Quito, and Bogotá by the mid-eighteenth century. The free descendants of slaves, often of mixed parentage, were in many places the largest population group, pushing the African-descended population in tropical cities in particular to well over 50 percent. Although agricultural slavery predominated in Brazil, the colony's cities had large slave populations as well. In 1775, for example, the city of Salvador, Bahia, had more slaves than free whites in its population.

Some wealthy households maintained fifteen or more slaves as domestics, but most slaves lived in households of middling wealth where masters seldom had more than one or two slaves. The small scale of slave holdings and the intimacy imposed by urban architecture produced a slave society necessarily more fluid and humane than that found in plantation regions of Brazil or elsewhere. Few urban slaves experienced labor demands as brutal as those of the sugar harvest. Better fed and clothed than their rural counterparts, urban slaves lived longer and had higher birthrates. Urban slave populations had marriage and fertility rates closer to those of the free population than did rural counterparts. Not only were urban slaves more likely to marry than rural slaves, but these marriages were also more likely to be stable and lasting.

In urban settings most owners and slaves knew one another well. This was particularly true in the case of household slaves who commonly lived under the same roof as their masters. Slaves who worked as artisans and even some lesser-skilled laborers also routinely shared housing with their owners. One of the most important results of this familiarity was that manumission (the freeing of slaves by their masters) was much more common in cities than in rural settings. Yet even here only a small fraction of the slave population, often the American-born offspring of slave women and Spanish or Portuguese men, gained emancipation.

Slaves in Latin America were permitted to purchase their freedom, a right that benefited urban slaves in particular. If a slave and master were unable to agree on a price for freedom, Spanish and Portuguese law allowed slaves to have a judge set the price of manumission. Economic opportunities in cities enabled slaves to earn cash wages or gain income as small-scale retailers. Male slaves often earned wages as artisans or laborers; female slaves washed clothing, sewed, and sold goods in city markets. All of these groups were able to save some of their earnings, and the most fortunate were able to purchase their freedom, swelling the size of the free black population. But even those who remained slaves had some discretionary income and autonomy. As a result, it was in urban centers that various voluntary associations appeared first among blacks.

Whether in cities or in rural areas dominated by plantations, slaves were ultimately at the mercy of their owners. As was true on plantations, some urban owners treated slaves badly, depriving them of adequate food and clothing or abusing them with whippings and other cruel punishments. Urban slaves, however, did receive limited protection from their proximity to courts and ecclesiastical authorities.

Colonial documents indicate clearly that slaves sought and often found help from the courts. Every *audiencia* assigned an attorney to protect the poor, slave and free, without charge. In many cases the courts forced owners to allow a slave to purchase his or her freedom or prevented owners from breaking up a marriage by selling one of the spouses. On occasion judges even ordered particularly cruel owners to sell their slaves. But in most cases, slaves' complaints of physical abuse, inadequate medical care, and even sexual assaults failed to secure the punishment of the abusive master or a transfer to a new master. Nevertheless, in contrast with judicial practice in the United States before the Civil War, the courts of colonial Latin America regularly presumed that a black man or woman was free unless an owner had clear proof of slave status.

More common than resort to the courts, aggrieved slaves took their fates in their own hands and ran away from difficult masters or harsh punishments. Runaways were common in cities like Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Lima, Quito, and Mexico City, and in some cases, runaways congregated in small *quilombos* or *palenques* within sight of the city itself. Many claimed to be free when seeking work. Because large numbers of black freedmen were present in most colonial cities, it was difficult for the authorities, or potential employers, to identify runaways. Since slaves and free blacks in the same cities were commonly tied together by kinship, occupational training, employment, and the experience of racism that touched every person of color, many runaways found free blacks willing to shield them from the authorities and facilitate integration in the economy.

The Catholic Church owned more slaves than any other institution, business, or family in the Americas. Convents and individual priests owned slaves. By the eighteenth century the Society of Jesus was the single largest owner of slaves in the Americas. The Jesuits' vast economic presence in the Americas included urban rental properties as well as farms, ranches, and plantations. They produced wine, brandy, sugar, *yerba* (a beverage derived from a plant native to Rio de la Plata region), and other products that they transported and sold in distant markets. These enterprises, essential to funding the Society's educational and humanitarian activities, often rested on the labor of slaves. While some evidence suggests that slaves owned by the Church enjoyed marginally better material conditions and more frequent marriage than those on plantations owned by laymen, clerics also applied corporal punishment and solitary confinement to slaves. The Catholic Church also provided some protections for slave marriages and taught that slaves were capable of salvation. In small ways the Church limited the power of owners, but it never opposed the institution of slavery itself.

The African slave trade provided the labor power that permitted the development of plantation economies in Brazil, Venezuela, and the Caribbean. In other areas, including coastal Peru and Ecuador, Argentina, and parts of Central America, slave labor was an important supplement to Indian labor drafts and wage labor. By the eighteenth century, black slavery was essential to the largest agricultural export

sectors in both Portuguese and Spanish America, and so these regions became the major centers of Afro-Latin American culture. The importation of black slaves also added to the genetic pool of Latin America and to the multiracial and culturally complex societies that characterized the colonial era.

NOTES

1. Quoted in Noble David Cook, *Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492–1650* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 103.
2. Quoted in W. George Lovell, “Disease and Depopulation in Early Colonial Guatemala,” *Secret Judgments of God: Old World Disease in Colonial Spanish America*, edited by Noble David Cook and W. George Lovell (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), p. 70.
3. John Hemming, *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 144.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
5. R. C. Padden, *The Hummingbird and the Hawk: Conquest and Sovereignty in the Valley of Mexico, 1503–1541* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1967), p. 230.
6. Quoted in Ann M. Wightman, *Indigenous Migration and Social Change: The Forasteros of Cuzco, 1570–1720* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 83.
7. Quoted in Kris Lane, “Captivity and Redemption: Aspects of Slave Life in Early Colonial Quito and Popayán,” *The Americas*, 57:2 (2000), p. 241.
8. Lolita Gutiérrez Brockington, “The African Diaspora in the Eastern Andes: Adaptation, Agency, and Fugitive Action, 1573–1677,” *The Americas*, 57:2 (2000), pp. 216–217.

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CHAPTER 5



Production, Exchange, and Defense

CHRONOLOGY

c. 1530	First large-scale silver strikes in New Spain
1543	Merchant guild (<i>consulado</i>) of Seville receives monopoly over legal trade with Indies
1545	Silver strike at Potosí
1546	Silver strike at Zacatecas
1550	Silver strike at Guanajuato
1550s	Introduction of amalgamation (<i>patio</i>) process for silver refining in New Spain; fleet system well established
1555	French capture and temporarily occupy Havana
1560s	Discovery of major mercury deposit in Huancavelica, Peru
1571	Introduction of amalgamation process in Peru
1572	Francis Drake's successful raid on Panama
Late 1570s	Regular trade between Peru, Mexico, and Manila
1580–1640	Crowns of Spain and Portugal held by same monarch
1592	<i>Consulado</i> approved for Mexico City
1604	Treaty of London ends conflict between Spain and England and establishes "effective occupation" as principle for colonial settlement
1613	<i>Consulado</i> approved for Lima
1620s	Decline of legal Atlantic trade between Spain and Indies begins; non-Spanish settlements in Caribbean and North America
1624–25	Dutch invasion of Bahia
1628	Dutch capture Spanish silver fleet off Cuba
1630–54	Dutch occupation of Pernambuco
1631	Spanish Crown prohibits trade between New Spain and Peru
1655	English seize Jamaica
Mid-1660s–1671	High point of age of buccaneers
1670s	Mexican mining production surpasses that of Peru
1680s	Portuguese found Colônia do Sacramento as center for contraband
1687	Major earthquake hits Lima and environs; results in grain imports from Chile
1690s	Discovery of major gold deposits in Brazil

THE MINING AND SUGAR INDUSTRIES

Colonies existed to increase the economic well-being and political strength of their mother countries. Their production and markets were intended to benefit solely their metropolises, which regulated trade and imposed taxes to transfer colonial wealth to themselves. The Portuguese Crown heavily depended on revenue derived from its factories and colonies, first from those in Africa and Asia and later from those in Brazil. The Castilian Crown, too, came to rely on New World income. American bullion enhanced royal coffers and added muscle to Spain's ambitions and expensive foreign policies. Controlling transatlantic trade to prevent gold and silver from reaching foreign hands and safely transporting bullion to the peninsula preoccupied royal advisers from the early sixteenth century onward.

Most of the conquistadors in Mexico, Peru, and New Granada quickly squandered any spoils they had gained. Few invested much in economically productive activities, and, with the windfall gone, Spaniards in many settlements began to slip toward an impoverished life of subsistence farming and barter. Gold strikes in Mexico, Central America, and later New Granada slowed this decline briefly, but few deposits could be worked profitably for long. Gold mining, therefore, seldom could support the development of settled agriculture or the growth of Spanish towns. Silver mining, on the other hand, required large sustained expenditures of capital and labor and thus had a much greater impact on long-term settlement patterns. The discovery of rich silver deposits in Mexico and Peru stalled the process of economic contraction and initiated a period of unprecedented prosperity in Spain's American empire.

Starting with Columbus's avid pursuit of gold, Spain's experience in much of the New World largely revolved around precious metals. The gold and silver taken as booty in New Spain, Peru, and New Granada fed the search for their sources. By 1550 a number of major deposits had been found, and extensive mining was under way. Networks of urban centers and their rural dependencies were formed in response to the industry's special requirements. Even regions far away from the major mining centers of northern Mexico and Upper Peru were organized to produce the food, fuel, livestock, and textiles that mines and miners needed. The production of silver and, to a lesser extent, gold also promoted the development of large-scale transatlantic trade and helped pay for Europe's growing trade with Asia.

Gold

The first American mining boom occurred in the Caribbean. Following the conquests on the mainland, goldfields were discovered in Mexico, Central America, New Granada, central Chile, and Peru. For the empire as a whole, the value of gold production exceeded that of silver in the years before 1540. Although gold remained paramount in New Granada and, briefly, Chile, silver production in New Spain, Upper Peru, and Peru far outstripped it in quantity and value.

Gold mining required little investment in machinery or plant. Miners used simple and inexpensive technologies to refine the gold flakes and nuggets. Most of the gold produced was panned or washed from the soil or riverbeds, although later there was some deep-shaft gold mining in Chile and New Granada.

Because miners could easily hide from royal officials the flakes and nuggets extracted from placer mines, no reliable estimate of colonial gold production is possible. Before 1550 more than 5 million pesos in gold was legally exported from Mexico, and another 10 million from Peru alone. By 1560 New Granada had produced over 7 million pesos worth of bullion, much of it in gold. Perhaps half of these totals represented plunder taken from the Indians. Later gold exports reflect actual Spanish production. During the last half of the sixteenth century, somewhat less than 3.5 million pesos in refined gold was exported from Peru; Mexico produced another million pesos. Registered gold production reached its nadir in the 1660s and 1670s when a significant contraband trade existed, but an expansion was under way by the early eighteenth century.

In the 1690s the first major gold deposits were discovered in Brazil. The strikes in Minas Gerais were among the richest found during the colonial period, and Brazilian gold production nearly quintupled between 1700 and 1720. Production grew more modestly until 1735. It then expanded substantially, peaking at nearly 16,000 kilograms between 1750 and 1754.

Silver

Large-scale silver strikes began about 1530 when Sultepec and Zumpango were discovered near Mexico City. Strikes in nearby Taxco and Tlalpujahua followed quickly. Major discoveries in the northern frontier zone—Zacatecas in 1546, Guanajuato in 1550, and Sombrerete in 1558—greatly expanded production in New Spain. In Upper Peru, the richest silver strike in America was at Potosí in 1545; a significant discovery at Castrovirreina in Peru followed about a decade later.

Silver always required more processing and hence more capital investment and labor than did gold. At first the miners relied on smelting, a refining technique that used simple and inexpensive technology. The ore was broken up using heavy iron hammers and stamping mills, packed in a furnace with charcoal or some other fuel, and fired.

Because smelting was labor intensive and required an abundant supply of fuel, it was ill suited for mines in regions with small populations or without forests. Potosí's elevation, for example, was above 15,000 feet, well beyond the timberline. Even well-forested areas were quickly exhausted by the mining industry. Located north of the preconquest agricultural frontier, Zacatecas was far from the dense Indian populations needed for a disciplined labor supply. Such disadvantages increased the cost of fuel and labor and often restricted the use of the smelting process to only the richest ores. This, in turn, placed a cap on total silver production.

The amalgamation process, although more costly, greatly improved the profitability of silver mining and spurred production. It first was used in Mexico in the 1550s and in Peru in 1571. The *patio* process, as it was known in New Spain, involved mixing finely ground ore—which had been transported by wagon from the stamping mill—with catalysts (either salt or copper pyrite) and mercury. Workers spread the resulting paste on the stone floor of a large patio, and animals or bare-legged Indian laborers mixed it. After the mixture had “cooked” for six to eight weeks, workers washed it, removed the silver amalgam, and saved the leftover

mercury for the next batch. The process employed in Peru was similar except that the mixture was cooked in large tanks rather than on a patio.

The need for mercury, or quicksilver, in the amalgamation process made its supply and cost crucial determinants of production levels. When supplies were abundant, miners and their financial backers were willing to invest in expensive new machinery and drainage shafts and to mine and process relatively poor-quality ores taken from older mines. High prices and short supplies tended to dry up credit and restrict exploitation to the richest surface ores.

Crown policy was more important than the free play of supply and demand in determining mercury's availability and price. The royal mine at Almadén in southern Spain at first supplied all the mercury used in the colonies. The discovery of a large mercury deposit in the early 1560s at Huancavelica, 220 kilometers southeast of Lima, expanded its availability. Quickly made a Crown monopoly, Huancavelica's mercury mine supplied all of Peru's needs, with a surplus exported to New Spain, until the early seventeenth century. Its declining production proved unable to meet Peru's demand, particularly after 1620. The Crown, which had been sending Almadén's output to New Spain, assigned part of it to Peru and supplemented this supply between 1620 and 1645 with mercury from Idrija, Slovenia.

The Crown determined the price of mercury, although it auctioned to merchants the right to distribute it in the colonies. Responding to royal fiscal exigencies and not market conditions, the government demanded high prices and rarely considered the miners' economic plight. From 1617 to 1767 the price of mercury in New Spain remained constant, but at Potosí in 1645 it dropped from 104.25 pesos to 97 pesos a hundredweight (compared with 82.5 in New Spain) and remained at this level until 1779. In the seventeenth century, because miners were forced to invest heavily to drain the older mines and then often found lower-quality ores, the marketing and pricing of mercury worked to depress silver production. Then, when the government experimented with lower mercury prices in the late eighteenth century, silver production rose.

Labor

Spaniards owned and supervised silver mines. Indians—supplemented in many mines by black slaves and some *castas*—performed the arduous physical labor. The major Mexican mines were located a great distance from the sedentary native population of the central plateau, whereas the Upper Peru and Peruvian mines were relatively close to the Andean population. This resulted in important differences in the labor systems of the two viceroyalties.

After the initial use of *encomienda* and enslaved Indians, miners in central and southern New Spain benefited from *repartimiento* labor until the early seventeenth century. After this period it was no longer a crucial source of workers. In the northern mining districts, Indian and black slaves were numerous, but Indians hired as free wage laborers, sometimes bound by debt peonage, quickly became predominant. By 1600 free wage laborers constituted over two thirds of a mining workforce that at that time numbered just over 9,000 for all of New Spain.

Reliance on free labor meant that Mexican mine owners had to adjust wages and working conditions to market conditions, paying high wages and offering other inducements during periods when high profits increased the competition for labor. Among the most common and highly regarded benefits was the right of workers to work on their own account on Sundays or to keep some portion of their production, often a specified amount of ore. When mines were worked out or mercury was scarce, however, workers had little protection. Wages fell, and even skilled miners were forced to seek other employment.

Because the colonial treasury derived substantial revenue from mining-related taxes and monopolies, officials consciously diverted scarce economic resources to support the vital mining industry. Thus, faced with a declining Indian population in Peru, the state used its authority to ensure adequate labor to meet the needs of the mine owners. Such aid increased labor costs and reduced profit levels in competing sectors of the economy, but added to capital, technology, and skilled overseers, this government policy guaranteed the mining sector's long-term primacy in the economy.

In Peru the *mitas* in the 1570s supplied 13,500 workers for Potosí and over 2,000 for Huancavelica. Although these forced labor drafts continued at lower levels into the nineteenth century, Indians hired for wages also became important participants, particularly in the jobs requiring skilled labor. Of the 9,900 workers in Potosí in the early seventeenth century, just over half were free wage laborers. Black slaves made up 14 percent of the mining labor force in New Spain but were less important in Peruvian mining.

Wage laborers, increasing numbers of whom were *castas*, handled most of the skilled tasks below ground at Potosí. These *barreteros* used pry bars and hammers to break loose ore that the Indian laborers, often *mitayos*, then hauled to the surface in straw baskets or cloth or leather bags. Typically they carried loads of over a hundred pounds up steep ladders and through narrow tunnels with only a single candle for light. The heavy burdens, the darkness, the long hours worked, the dangerous ladders, the blasting that became commonplace in the eighteenth century, and a host of respiratory ailments contributed to high levels of injury and death.

Struggle for Subsistence

From childhood, nearly all the population spent their daylight hours engaged in manual labor in return for generally abysmal compensation. The struggle for survival consumed most of their energies, and Sundays and religious holidays offered their only respite. The special requirements of planting and harvesting could cancel even these unpaid breaks. Indians and other free rural laborers routinely toiled from ten to twelve hours a day for up to 300 or more days a year. Slaves, particularly on sugar plantations, often worked longer. Indian employees in the textile *obrajes* of Ecuador worked from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. six days a week except for seven weeks per year when they were permitted to sow, weed, and harvest their own fields. In the early seventeenth century, *mita* laborers had their workweek reduced from six to five days, with Sundays and Mondays off,

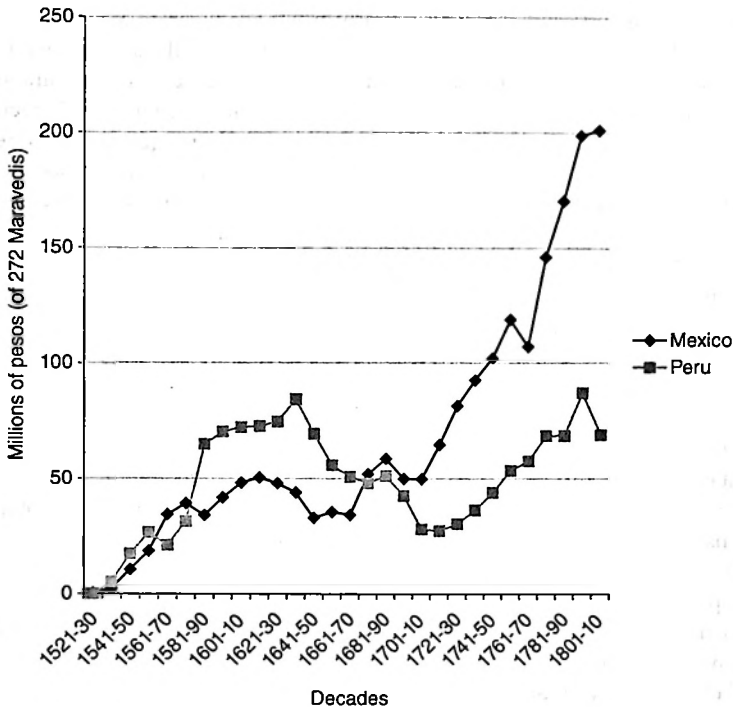
but an oppressive quota system often extended their toil beyond the theoretical twelve-hour shifts.

Despite extreme fluctuations in the prices of basic foodstuffs, principally maize, wages paid to skilled and unskilled laborers changed little. This was the result of the fierce competition among the masses of poor men and women who sought employment in these difficult labor markets. It was also a consequence of "wage custom," the ability of employers to enforce a uniform daily wage, a *jornal*, on workers regardless of changes in the labor market. A wage of two *reales* per day for laborers, for example, remained in place for over 200 years in Andean cities and mines. Even in the skilled crafts, among shoemakers, silversmiths, and tailors, wage stagnation was common, with all master craftsmen paying their journeymen the same wage decade after decade. Few urban workers worked fifty-two six-day weeks a year: most endured periods of unemployment and privation each year. Because few wage laborers could accumulate savings, extended unemployment or illness often led to destitution or forced migration.

As a result, earnings often failed to cover the basic needs of individuals and families. Unskilled rural workers in Ecuador received fifteen to twenty pesos a year plus housing and food allotments, the total compensation being roughly equivalent to that received by an urban day laborer in Quito. Required tribute payments substantially reduced Indian workers' net pay. The cash value of the total compensation—money, food, housing, and clothing—varied by region and date but was often too small to provide the necessities for survival. Free rural laborers in Brazil usually received some of their compensation in the form of permission to graze a few animals or plant a small garden. Only among the more skilled artisans of Brazilian cities did earning potential exceed subsistence costs. *Hacendados* and owners of mines and *obrajes* in the Spanish colonies often advanced wages to workers to make up this shortfall, not out of kindness but to maintain a stable and dependent labor force. By combining their meager income with a frugal diet, minimal shelter, and a set of homespun or inexpensive clothing, laborers clung to life precariously. Although they received higher cash wages than their rural counterparts, urban manual laborers usually had correspondingly greater living expenses because they had to buy housing, food, and clothing.

Production of Silver

Graph 5.1 shows silver production in Peru and Mexico from 1581 to 1810. Production rose until the early decades of the seventeenth century. Then a long period of decline followed in Peru. A similar contraction began and ended earlier in Mexico, which by 1700 was mining more registered silver than it had a century earlier. Incredible growth followed in the eighteenth century. Mexican industry experienced a boom in the first quarter of the century that was followed by successive spurts of growth that propelled registered output between 1801 and 1810 to over 200 million pesos, more than four times the amount for 1701–10. Although Peru's production more than tripled in the eighteenth century and even surpassed its seventeenth-century apogee, Mexico's production was well over twice as large as Peru's for most of the 1700s.



Graph 5.1 Registered Silver Production in Peru and Mexico, 1581–1810.

Sugar

The importance of sugar as an export in late-sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Brazil rivaled that of silver for Mexico and Peru. Although gold and diamonds challenged its lead in the first half of the eighteenth century and tobacco, too, rose in prominence, sugar remained Brazil's most important export until supplanted by coffee in the 1830s.

The profitability of sugar production in Iberia and the Atlantic islands—Madeira, the Azores, the Cape Verdes, the Canaries, and São Tomé—led Portuguese settlers to introduce sugarcane into Brazil soon after Cabral's landfall. During the donatary period it became firmly established in São Vicente (on the coast of the present-day state of São Paulo) and Pernambuco. The extension of royal authority to Bahia in 1549 was accompanied by official efforts to foster a sugar industry. By the 1580s, the combined output of the northeastern captaincies of Pernambuco—the most important sugar region until the 1630s—and Bahia dominated the colony's production.

Sugar plantations (*engenhos*) required substantial capital to construct mills and purchase labor. Portuguese investors, including the original donataries,

supplied much of the initial capital, but early profits enabled mill owners in Brazil to expand their operations. Typically an *engenho* had a mill that processed not only the owner's cane but also, for a charge of often 50 percent of the cane processed, that of a number of *lavradores*, cane farmers who were tenants, sharecroppers, renters, or independent landowners. This practice, unique at this time in the Americas, enabled men with little capital to plant cane and, in good years, to profit handsomely. At the same time it gave the mill owner some protection against falling prices or a bad harvest, by spreading the risks and costs of planting. Because the planters relied on credit—primarily supplied by religious institutions and merchants—to build mills, purchase slaves, cover expenses, and enlarge their operations, limiting their potential losses through processing *lavradores'* cane was a sound business practice. In addition, this relationship with the *lavradores* allowed the planters to benefit financially from economies of scale, by investing in more efficient, large-scale crushing and refining capacity.

Engenhos varied in value according to the amount and quality of land, the number of slaves, the condition of the mill and processing equipment, livestock, transportation equipment, and residential facilities. Land and slaves were the most expensive components of an *engenho*. Because most planters had over 20 percent of their capital tied up in slaves, fluctuations in slave prices could greatly affect their profit.

Unlike gold or silver, sugar had no intrinsic value. It was a bulky, perishable commodity that required rapid handling when harvested and timely transport to market and sale, to reduce storage costs that could drain profits quickly. These requirements limited the location of sugar plantations to coastal regions or along rivers where sugar could be transported inexpensively. The Bahian Recôncavo, the area surrounding the Bay of All Saints, enjoyed particularly good water transportation, a natural advantage that contributed substantially to its great success as a sugar-producing region.

Slave laborers performed a myriad of tasks associated with Brazil's sugar cultivation and processing. The slaves' supervisors might be whites, freedmen, or slaves themselves. Few *engenhos* had fewer than forty slaves; sixty to eighty was most common in Bahian mills. Field hands invariably outnumbered all other slaves combined, although individually they were less valuable than were house slaves, artisans, or skilled workers, to say nothing of labor foremen.

There was no technological breakthrough in sugar production to compare with the introduction of the amalgamation process in silver mining. Production rose principally from increased employment of land and labor. The most important technological improvement was the introduction by 1613 of a three-roller vertical mill to replace the older two-roller horizontal mill. Planters quickly adopted the new mill, for it was smaller, faster, easier, and less expensive to construct and more energy efficient than its predecessor. The new mill's advantages enabled some *lavradores* to open small mills and certainly contributed to a near doubling of mills from 192 in 1612 to about 350 in 1629.



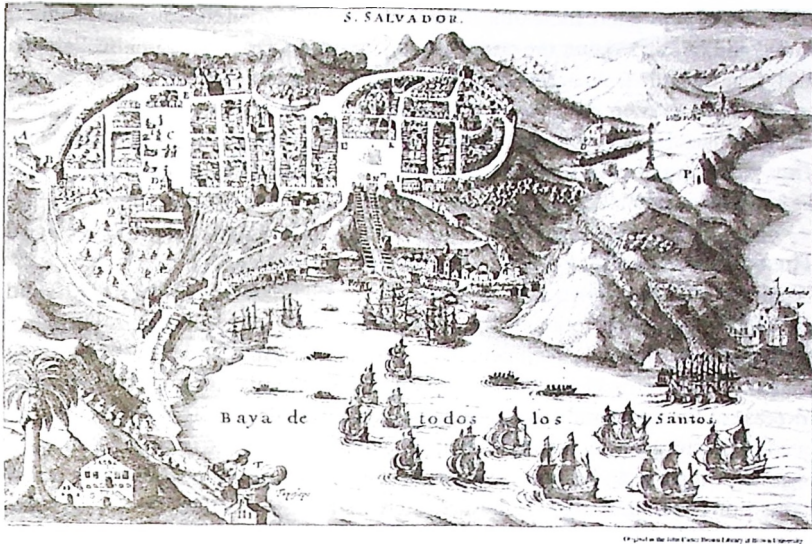
Slave resistance took many forms. Running away was the most common. In Brazil and other plantation colonies, slave owners paid bounties to men who hunted down runaways. Here a mounted slave catcher returns with a bound captive.

Sugar production grew rapidly in the sixteenth century as rising prices stimulated investment. On Brazilian sugar plantations, Indian slaves continued to be the most important labor source until the end of the sixteenth century. Planters increased their importation of African slaves after 1570 and, during the remainder of the colonial period, this labor source sustained the growth of the sugar industry. Annual production increased from 6,000 metric tons in 1580 to 10,000 in 1610, and to between 15,000 and 22,000 in the 1620s.

With production remaining at 15,000 to 22,000 metric tons for over a century, the market price for sugar on the one hand and the cost of slave labor on the other largely determined the planters' profits. Sugar prices rose in the sixteenth century, declined in the 1610s, and increased again in the 1620s and early 1630s. Until mid-century, prices remained reasonably high, but general inflation reduced the planters' profit. Nonetheless, prices were strong enough for several more decades for planters to purchase slaves, whose prices had declined slightly since mid-century. A crisis for planters began in the 1680s when competition from foreign plantations in the Caribbean islands lowered sugar prices and drove up the cost of slaves. Although there were some good years subsequently, the overall position of the Brazilian planters was declining. The discovery of gold in Minas Gerais strengthened the competition for slaves. By 1710 a planter had to sell twice as much sugar to purchase a slave than had been necessary in 1635, a condition that persisted until 1750. Sugar's vulnerability to international competition meant that over the long term, planters had little control over their economic fortunes.

Bullion and sugar were the most important exports of colonial Latin America. Revenue from taxes, governmental monopolies, and other fiscal measures associated with these products were crucial supports for the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns. Consequently, colonial authorities directly encouraged and promoted mining and the sugar industry and sought to ensure the safe shipment of silver, gold, and sugar to Iberia. When necessary, these governments intervened to ensure a steady, cheap supply of labor. Thus officials in Peru maintained the *mita* for Potosí and Huancavelica. And, in the case of Brazil, Portuguese authorities promoted the African slave trade and, during the economic crisis of the seventeenth century, limited the financial liability of plantation owners. Mining and the sugar industry tended to determine the cyclical behavior of the colonial economies' market-oriented sector. That is, when profits expanded, other areas of the economies grew. When profits fell, all the economies tended to contract, as there was also less capital for investment and consumption. It was precisely the centrality of mining and sugar in the imperial economies that separated them from other colonial exports.

Although each region of the New World tried to produce goods that would command a market outside its boundaries, no other products affected such large geographic areas or contributed so much to imperial finance as did silver and sugar. The fortunes of cacao in Venezuela, cochineal in Oaxaca, indigo in Central America, and hides in the Río de la Plata, to cite four examples, were important to local and regional economies, but their value to the Spanish Crown in terms of revenue or their impact on other areas of the colonial economies was modest in comparison with silver. Not until the eighteenth century would such regional exports emerge from the long shadow of mining and assume a significant place in the imperial economy.



Early-seventeenth-century view of Salvador, Bahia.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND TAXATION

Trade and taxation transferred to Europe much of the wealth from American mines and plantations. By the end of the sixteenth century, Europe benefited from, but did not yet control, a network of exchange that included America, parts of Asia, and the African coast. High profits generated by American exports subsidized a more diversified, less valuable mix of European imports, which included wheat, rice, olive oil, cod, wine, and textiles. The wealth produced by Spanish America and Brazil promoted the growth of European industry and subsidized the consolidation of European commercial and military power in Asia and Africa.

Transatlantic trade in general operated under several constraints. Time and distance, two sides of the same coin, limited the range of tradable goods. Days at sea, not absolute mileage, determined what could be transported profitably. Peninsular merchants could send perishable goods like wheat to Brazil but not to Peru and have it arrive in salable condition. Textiles and other manufactured goods, in contrast, could be sent anywhere. The limited availability and high cost of cargo space also affected what was transported across the Atlantic. On the American side, gold and precious stones, of course, were ideal, but silver was acceptable as well. Although both Iberian nations were only secondary actors by the eighteenth century, their New World colonies continued as important participants in European

commercial expansion. Increasing the size of ships expanded the range of products that could be carried, but the cost of getting goods by sea from Lima to Panama and then by mule train across the isthmus for loading for export to Spain added substantially to their cost. In contrast, coastal Brazil and the Caribbean regions enjoyed lower freight costs and shorter transportation times to European markets. Thus products of less intrinsic value than gold and silver, even animal hides, could be exported profitably.

The Spanish Trading System

Legal trade between Spain and the colonies generally rose from 1504 to 1610 and then fell until well into the eighteenth century. Expansion coincided with conquest, settlement, the development of the mining industry, and the early growth of markets for European goods that resulted from immigration and the natural increase of the white and Hispanicized nonwhite population. The decline was related to Spain's growing inability to supply colonial markets, to contraband trade, to foreign threats, and to the growing capacity of the colonies to produce many items previously imported. Falling registered silver production accelerated this downward trend for much of the seventeenth century. By the time mining production began its spectacular rise in about 1720, the trading system developed in the sixteenth century had long been in shambles.

At first transatlantic trade was only an adjunct to the transportation of men and supplies from Spain to the Indies. Settlers wanted wheat for bread, wine, olive oil, traditional sweets, horses and other livestock, weapons, and textiles but at first had little besides gold to exchange. As a result, many Spanish ships and sailors remained in the New World. Over half of the seventy-one ships arriving in 1520, for example, were purchased for use in interisland trade or voyages of exploration.

The conquest, plunder, and settlement of the mainland and subsequent development of silver mining in Mexico and Peru transformed the size and character of Atlantic trade. Thousands of Spaniards eager to duplicate the conquistadors' achievements arrived in the years after 1530. Added to a growing creole and Hispanicized *casta* population, they dramatically increased the market for European products. From 1506 to 1550, the volume of trade increased nearly tenfold. Dyes, medicinal plants, sugar, tobacco, and chocolate produced in the circum-Caribbean colonies were added to the more valuable gold and silver of Mexico, Peru, and New Granada on a lengthening list of New World exports.

A serious downturn lasted from 1550 to 1562 because the Spaniards had taken over most of the Indians' treasure, but silver production had not yet expanded sufficiently to maintain a high level of imports. With goods shipped to the Indies selling slowly and profits declining, investors and merchants withdrew from the trade. The Crown went bankrupt in 1557 and then seized private stocks of bullion in Spain. This deepened the depression as investors looked for ways to keep their money in the Indies.

The rising silver production in the 1560s, credited to the amalgamation process, brought renewed expansion in trade until 1592, when thirty years of high

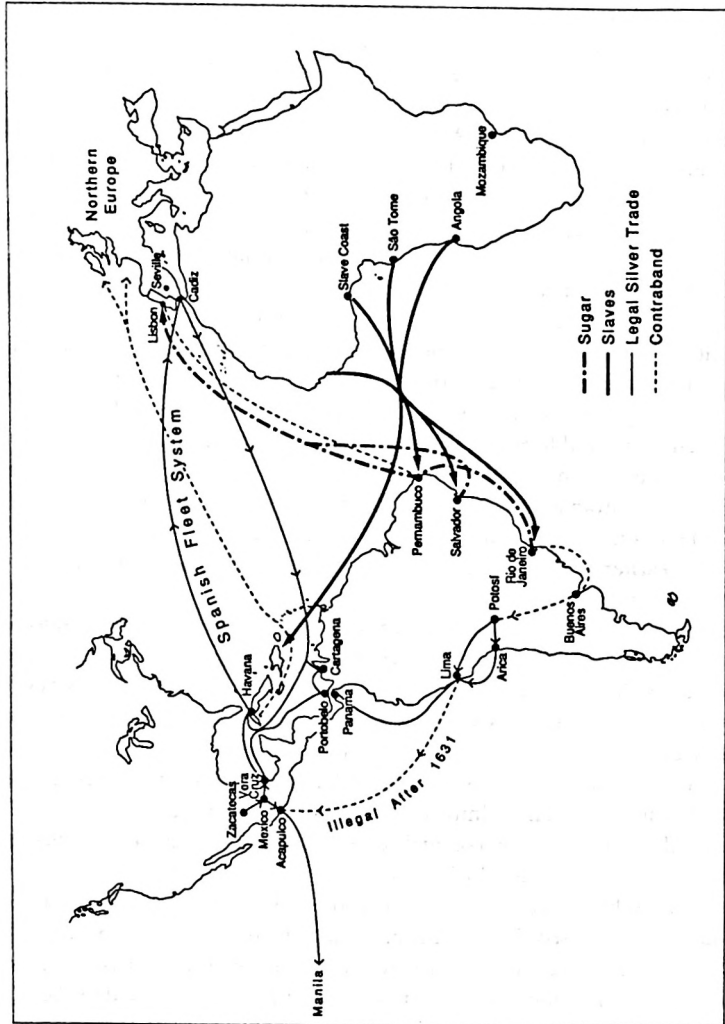
levels of transatlantic trade began. The initial dependence on imported agricultural products dwindled rapidly as the colonies' production of wheat, wine, and olive oil increased. Textiles and other manufactured goods replaced comestibles as favored imports. Regular trade with Manila, which began in the late 1570s, expanded so much that beginning in 1582 the Crown took steps to restrict it. Nonetheless, by the 1590s Mexican merchants were intermediaries in a dynamic trade between Peru and Asia. Chinese silks, porcelains, and lacquered wares were exchanged for silver. By the early seventeenth century the value of the Manila trade actually exceeded that of the Atlantic trade. One measure of the extent of this trade was the use of the silver peso in much of Asia. The Crown finally responded by limiting the number and size of ships sailing from Acapulco to Manila and banning all trade between New Spain and Peru in 1631, a ban that remained until the late eighteenth century. Although designed to stem the hemorrhage of silver across the Pacific, this commercial prohibition had a chilling effect on intercolonial trade in dyes, cacao, and other products as well.

After 1622 the Atlantic trade declined in both volume and value. The total shipments of goods outbound and inbound from Spain and the Indies fell 60 percent between 1606–10 and 1646–50. The several decades of decline in New Spain's silver exports after 1635 were particularly notable. After 1650 the value of goods legally exported to Spain continued to drop, with New Spain's legal exports falling 75 percent from 1650 to 1699, and the value of Peru's exports plummeting even further. Contraband trade, on the other hand, flourished, and the amount of American bullion that reached Europe between 1660 and 1710 may have exceeded that for any earlier comparable period of time. The turnaround for increased legal trade with Spain awaited the 1720s.

Before the wealth of America was known, the Castilian Crown resolved to control the colonial trade for its own financial and political benefit. In 1503 it required trading ships to load and unload at the Andalusian port of Seville. Commerce with the colonies was placed under the supervision of the Casa de Contratación, or House of Trade, created in the same year. Some seventy miles up the Guadalquivir River, Seville was safe from foreign attack and was an established commercial, financial, and administrative center close to the supplies of grain, wine, and olive oil sought by colonial settlers. These advantages outweighed the city's inadequate facilities for docking, shipbuilding, and repair.

The first body created specifically to handle American affairs, the Casa authorized sailings, supervised the loading and unloading of ships, licensed emigrants, collected duties, kept track of American revenues, and handled judicial cases arising from the Indies trade until its abolition in 1790. The Casa was moved to Cádiz in 1717 because neither the Guadalquivir River nor Seville could handle the immense ships of the later years. Earlier, in 1668, the Crown had authorized the loading and unloading of transatlantic vessels in Sanlúcar de Barrameda. Cádiz became the major port in the trade after 1679, nearly four decades before the Casa was transferred.

The Casa worked closely with the wholesale merchants' guild, or *consulado*, of Seville after the Crown granted it in 1543 a monopoly over the Indies trade.



Map 6 Colonial Trade.

Through the *consulado*, the wholesale merchants initially controlled colonial commercial activities by using agents they sent to the New World. In 1592 and 1613, however, the Crown authorized *consulados* for the wholesale merchants of Mexico City and Lima. Because these merchants had a monopoly over trade in their respective viceroyalties, they were largely able to determine the exchange value of silver and other colonial products. Consequently, commerce was generally more profitable than mining, and over time wealth in the colonies often accumulated in the hands of merchants rather than miners or other producers. This reduced investment in production and restricted the colonial economy's ability to grow.

The depredations of pirates and foreign rivals forced Spain to protect its Atlantic trade. The Crown's solution was to create a fleet system for conveying goods and to limit transatlantic commerce to three major American ports: Vera Cruz for New Spain, Cartagena for New Granada, and Nombre de Dios (later Portobelo) for Peru and the remainder of Spanish South America. By 1550 the system of regular convoys to and from the Indies was well established. In the mature system, one fleet (the *flota*) sailed in May for Vera Cruz, where its merchants traded European goods for Mexican silver and sometimes dyes, hides, and other products. A second fleet (the *galeones*) left Seville in August for Cartagena and then proceeded to the Isthmus of Panama. At Nombre de Dios, merchants traded goods for silver brought by sea from Lima and transported by mule train from Panama City. Once loaded with bullion and other exports of lesser value, the two fleets joined in Havana to sail in the spring for Spain.

Vera Cruz and the isthmian ports were steamy, pestilential, unhealthy sites nearly abandoned except when a fleet arrived. Word that the ships were offshore brought thousands of persons—including merchants, porters, muleteers, and prostitutes—to the ports to participate in the ensuing trade fairs. The inhospitable environment and pent-up demand promoted a feverish pace for these exchanges. *Consulado* merchants from Lima and Mexico City purchased European goods, principally textiles, in large lots and transported them to their warehouses in the capital cities. There they marketed the goods directly through their own outlets, through retailers and petty vendors, and through *corregidores* and *alcaldes mayores* who employed the *repartimiento de bienes* to sell to Indian communities.

Taxes on trade paid the cost of defending the fleets. The additional profit to be made through tax evasion, however, proved irresistible to many merchants. Bribing customs officials and sailors, mislabeling the contents of crates, and shipping more goods than were declared were three ways in which merchants cheated the Crown. Tax cheating reduced revenues, but the cost of effective protection for a fleet could not sink below a minimum level. Faced with inadequate revenues, the Crown responded by increasing taxes on trade, a step that, in turn, made tax avoidance even more attractive. The result was a trading system laden with fraud that mocked the Crown's efforts to maintain a commercial monopoly.

The Atlantic fleet system reinforced Seville's commercial monopoly and imposed a cycle of scarcity and glut on the colonial economy. Concentrating wholesale trade at one Spanish and three American ports, it favored heavily capitalized

commercial houses. They were able to buy and sell in large quantities and eager to limit the volume of colonial imports to reduce risk and secure high prices and profits.

In a free market, the arrival of a convoy from Spain would have dramatically lowered the price of European goods in major colonial cities. In their pursuit of reliable profits, *consulado* merchants sought to limit market adjustments and obtain elevated prices for their merchandise. While using the fleet system reduced merchants' risks, its inefficiencies and unreliability, especially from the 1620s onward, also created high prices for European goods. Although never complete, the exclusion of Spain's commercial rivals from colonial markets kept the exchange value of American silver, dye stuffs, hides, pearls, and other exports artificially low.

In Castile, the Seville monopoly and the fleet system also transferred profits from producers to merchants and speculators, thus eliminating incentives to invest in new technology or to hire additional labor. Because the origin of goods shipped to the colonies hardly affected the merchants' profits, Seville's *consulado* comfortably accommodated itself to the decline of Spanish industry after the



Slaves producing rope tobacco, which was an important export to Africa and North America from the Spanish colonies and Brazil.

mid-sixteenth century and the substitution of foreign goods in the American trade. By the 1620s, foreign merchants used *consulado* members as frontmen, shipped foreign goods, and controlled most of Spain's Atlantic trade. French merchants in particular became increasingly prominent as the seventeenth century progressed. By 1700 perhaps no more than one eighth of the goods shipped to the Indies were produced in Spain.

The fleet system gradually failed to provide predictable and regular service. The system occasionally faltered after 1580, and by the 1620s a complete breakdown was clearly under way. Sailings became less regular; interruptions of several years were common. From 1650 to 1699, twenty-five fleets sailed to New Spain but only sixteen to the Isthmus of Panama. By the end of the seventeenth century, the fleet system was nearly defunct; only four fleets sailed to the isthmus from 1680 to 1699. Both the Spanish economic decline and the growth of Dutch and English naval power had undermined the system. Nonetheless, in meeting its primary responsibility—getting American bullion safely to Spain—the fleet system was remarkably effective: only in 1628 and 1656 did foreign rivals capture the bullion the fleet was carrying.

Contraband trade offered attractive possibilities for extra profits to colonial producers and serious fiscal problems for Spain because the traders paid no taxes. In addition, it sometimes undercut the prices of Spanish goods when the fleets did arrive. Portuguese merchants in Brazil gained limited illegal access to the silver of Potosí through an active contraband trade with Buenos Aires and Paraguay. British and Dutch competitors of Spanish merchant monopolies used their Caribbean colonies to penetrate overpriced, inefficient Spanish markets. Yet these exchanges were too irregular and unpredictable to create significant new colonial investment in export-oriented production. Perishable agricultural products, in particular, presented special problems for contraband trade. Nevertheless, in Venezuela, coastal Central America, and Argentina, contraband grew in importance during the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth.

As long as the crippled fleet system and Seville's commercial monopoly remained, contraband trade conducted within the fleet system and by foreigners dealing directly with colonists absorbed large quantities of American bullion. Only when a reforming Spanish government in the eighteenth century encouraged production through tax reductions and a liberalized commercial policy did legal colonial exports again thrive.

Brazil

Because Portugal focused its limited resources on developing the riches of the East Indies during the sixteenth century, it exercised little control over Brazil's early economic development. Until the mid-seventeenth century, the Portuguese Crown allowed almost unrestricted trade between metropolitan and colonial ports. In addition to Oporto and Lisbon, small ports like Caminha, Viana, and Aveiro regularly sent caravels to Brazil. Although each Brazilian captaincy had a port, the sugar ports of Recife, Salvador, and Rio de Janeiro were the most

important. The ships transporting sugar were generally small, 80 to 150 tons, and lightly armed. Although convoys sailed in the 1590s in response to English privateering, their use was irregular. Portuguese participated in the trade, but English and especially Dutch shippers operating under Portuguese licenses were the most important carriers in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Since Holland's rebellion against Philip II in 1568, Spain had sought to regain control over its former possession. As part of this broader objective, in 1605 Philip III excluded the Dutch from trading with the Portuguese world, joined to the Spanish realms since 1580. The Dutch retaliated by raiding ships carrying Brazilian sugar. During the Twelve-Years' Truce (1609–21) between the Dutch and united Spanish and Portuguese Crowns (1580–1640), Dutch commerce with Brazil boomed. Almost two thirds of the ships in the trade were Dutch. They conveyed sugar to a number of European markets, including Amsterdam, where forty sugar refineries were operating in 1650. The end of the truce brought a renewal of hostilities and a Dutch invasion of Salvador in 1624–25 and the occupation of Pernambuco from 1630 to 1654. At last awakened to the threat posed by this unrelenting pressure, the Crown turned to protected convoys. It chartered the Brazil Company in 1649 to provide a fleet of warships to protect Atlantic routes in return for a monopoly of Brazil's most common imports—flour, olive oil, wine, and codfish—and the right to tax the colony's exports. New Christian investors, resented by other important elite groups, provided much of the leadership and capital. Undermined by religious bigotry and undercapitalized from the outset, the company never met its obligations, and the Crown took it over in 1664. Nonetheless, the fleet system survived this collapse and lived on for another century. Fleets of a hundred vessels were not uncommon, although one English observer remembered one early fleet as "the pitifullest vessels that ever I saw."¹

A separate trade with Africa supplied slaves for the sugar industry. Although the Crown experimented with granting monopoly contracts like the Spanish *asientos*, the Brazilian slave trade was, in practice, hardly regulated, and merchants residing in the colony organized and directed much of the trade with Africa. This relatively lax oversight of Brazil's trade with both Europe and Africa distinguishes the Portuguese commercial system from that of Spain and its colonies. Brazilian merchants, moreover, participated more in offshore commerce than did their Spanish counterparts.

British trade with Portugal and Brazil remained insignificant for several decades after sugar from English plantations in the Caribbean replaced Brazilian sugar in the mid-seventeenth century. Beginning in the 1690s, however, the mining boom in Brazil brought back prosperity. By failing to protect its own production of manufactured goods and by outlawing colonial production, Portugal encouraged the capture of the Brazilian market by British factories working through Portuguese commercial intermediaries. By 1750 British exports to Portugal valued at little more than 1.1 million pounds (£) were producing a favorable balance of trade of nearly £800,000. Although some historians attribute this commercial ascendancy to the Methuen Treaty of 1703 and its antecedents, shifting European

political rivalries and Britain's early development of cotton textiles suitable for wear in the tropics were more important.

Taxation

The Spanish Crown taxed its American colonies enough that the empire as a whole not only paid the costs of its administration and defense but also produced a fiscal surplus for remission to the peninsula. New World revenues shipped to Spain became important about 1550 and expanded substantially during the reign of Philip II (1556–98). They totaled 20 to 25 percent of the Crown's revenue toward the end of Philip's rule, a substantial sum that helped finance his expensive foreign policy in Europe. Remittances generally declined in the seventeenth century, especially after 1640 for New Spain and after 1660 for Peru. In the 1590s half of the revenue collected in New Spain was spent in the Indies; this amount increased to nearly 80 percent a century later. Indeed, the amount of public revenue sent from Mexico to the Philippines in some decades of the seventeenth century was over half the amount remitted to Spain. For Peru, only 36 percent of the revenue collected in the 1590s remained there, but the amount leaped to 55 percent the following decade and to 95 percent in the 1680s, a consequence more of declining tax income than rising expenditures.

The Crown levied a variety of taxes in the New World. It raised rates and introduced new impositions when possible. The treasury in seventeenth-century Peru received income from over forty separate sources. Although the colonists paid less in taxes than did the Castilian peasantry, the colonial population bore a substantial burden relative to its resources. The importance of different taxes for royal revenue varied by district. Mining taxes and profits from the sale of mercury were paramount in the mining districts. Imposts on commercial transactions were central in the ports and administrative centers. And the importance of Indian tribute varied by region and with changes in the size of the Indian population. With the exception of Indian tribute, the Crown normally farmed out tax collection until the second half of the eighteenth century. Tax farmers paid an agreed-upon sum to collect a tax for a specified length of time, with their profit coming from collecting a sum larger than that owed. Both private entrepreneurs and corporations farmed taxes. During most of the seventeenth century, for example, the Lima *consulado* collected the *alcabala* and the port taxes.

As Brazil's major source of wealth, the sugar industry was taxed accordingly. These taxes, however, reduced the price competitiveness of Brazilian sugar in the international market and restricted the capital available for investment in land, labor, and technology. Until the gold boom, tithes levied after 1551 on agricultural products contributed most among the New World revenues. Although sugar was only one of many items subjected to the tithe, the value of its production made its yield extremely important. In the 1590s, an import tax of 20 percent and a sales tax of 10 percent were imposed on goods entering Portugal from Brazil. With rising imports and sales of Brazilian sugar, again the industry paid a heavy price for its success. Colonial municipalities also taxed sugar, their responsibility

to provide "voluntary" extra support on occasion adding to the burden. Slaves, too, were taxed intermittently after 1699, thus hitting the planters once more. Tax farmers routinely collected these and numerous other impositions until the late eighteenth century.

In both Brazil and Spanish America, the efforts of metropolitan merchants and colonial bureaucrats to control and limit commercial relationships failed. Neither Iberian state had the human and material resources necessary to realize its colonial vision. Their efforts, however, greatly influenced the direction of subsequent economic growth in the colonies.

DEFENSE

The papal donation as modified by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 gave Spain and Portugal dominion over the Indies. As exploration and conquest proceeded, exaggerated accounts of New World wealth circulated in the Old, arousing the cupidity of European monarchs and common adventurers. The flow of wealth from the American colonies was seen by Spain's European rivals as the basis for its aggressive military and political policies. Individual ship captains, merchants, and adventurers simply resented being excluded from exploiting the wealth of the New World. Nearly incessant conflict in Europe provided an excuse for French and English attacks on Spanish and Portuguese shipping and colonial towns.

In the early seventeenth century, the newly independent Dutch became the most aggressive rival of the Iberian powers. Their unprecedented pressure opened the way for the first successful non-Iberian colonies in the Caribbean and North America as well as the temporary occupation of northeast Brazil. The subsequent age of buccaneers left a swath of destruction that lasted until the late seventeenth century. In the ensuing worldwide colonial conflicts of the eighteenth century, the Americas became a regular theater of combat.

For the Spanish Crown, protecting the transatlantic trade and the remission of bullion, defending New World towns and territory, and controlling the entry of foreigners into the empire were parts of the same problem. Deep involvement in European conflicts precluded focusing on New World defense, but the need for American revenue to sustain these commitments forced Spain to invest resources in colonial defense. The result was the ad hoc evolution of a defensive policy remarkably successful in protecting the shipment of bullion to Spain and the territorial integrity of the colonies. It was far less effective in keeping unwanted foreigners out of the empire and, by the 1620s, progressively less able to control trade.

Defense of the Indies originally meant protecting treasure dispatched to Spain from Caribbean and Tierra Firme ports. Thus early military planning focused on both naval protection for ships carrying bullion and the defense of the circum-Caribbean ports. In the mid-1570s, however, the need to defend the Pacific coast and especially the movement of silver from Peru to Panama became apparent. The later development of the Manila trade extended the defensive perimeter as Acapulco emerged as New Spain's premier Pacific port.

As the area subject to attack expanded, the cost of defending it increased as well. Always penurious, the Crown's willingness to spend money on New World defense fluctuated with the severity of specific threats, the availability of revenue, and the financial demands created by its European conflicts. Throughout the sixteenth century, the Crown was generally able to defend the Indies and its trading system. Pressure from the Dutch in the Atlantic and Pacific during the early decades of the seventeenth century, however, nearly overwhelmed Spain's capacities. Coming all at once, declining registered silver production and government revenue, the tremendous expenditures and losses incurred during the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), the revolts of Catalonia and Portugal that began in 1640, and the growth of piracy prevented Spain from regaining control of the Caribbean.

The absence of significant bullion production until the close of the seventeenth century made Brazil less attractive than Spanish America was to foreign predators. Foreign threats were real, however, and French interest in the region persuaded the Portuguese to settle it. The greatest foreign threat to colonial Brazil came in the seventeenth century when the Dutch invaded and occupied northeastern Brazil in 1630. Their expulsion in 1654 did not end foreign incursions. Defending the vulnerable coastal ports remained a major preoccupation of colonial government, but Portugal's close ties with England and isolation from most European wars saved Brazil from becoming a major theater for conflict.

The Defense of the Americas in the Sixteenth Century

Spain's chronic immersion in European conflict began when Ferdinand intervened in Italian affairs in the 1490s. The accession of Charles I to the Crowns of Castile and Aragon in 1516, his Habsburg inheritance of Burgundy and lands in central Europe, and his election as Holy Roman Emperor in 1519 intensified Spain's European involvement. Recurrent wars with France and, as the Reformation meshed with politics, Protestant territories continued until the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559. Charles's goal of a European empire, however, eluded him, and he abdicated in 1556. Philip II refocused Spain, turning it from central Europe toward the Atlantic, but he, too, spent his reign at war. Different enemies—Calvinist rebels in the Netherlands and, by the 1580s, England—brought the same financial consequence: bankruptcy.

Foreign threats to the Indies and its trade in the sixteenth century came from corsairs rather than national navies. Initially the corsairs inflicted their greatest damage on ships in the Atlantic triangle formed by the Strait of Gibraltar, the Canaries, and the Azores. Their focus shifted to the Antilles about mid-century, and their seizures increased. In addition, they raided coastal towns over one hundred times before 1585. The French capture, sack, and temporary occupation of Havana in 1555 was the most dramatic of these incursions. Stunned, Spain initiated a massive fortifications project that helped secure this key port until the British captured it in 1762.

In response to the corsairs' attacks, Spain first relied on armed convoys to transport merchandise and bullion across the Atlantic; on a patrol fleet in the

Atlantic triangle; and on forts, artillery, and militia in the New World. As the corsairs increased their pressure in the Caribbean at mid-century, the coastal patrol squadrons became important. A French Huguenot settlement on Florida's east coast prompted the Crown to add military support to the expedition that was undertaking a long-planned colonization there. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés expelled the intruders and placed a garrison at St. Augustine. When the corsairs turned to the Spanish Main and Central America, Spain was forced to shift its defensive strategy. Spain had general success against the thirty to forty small foreign ships, about half traders and half raiders, that operated in the Caribbean in the 1570s. By the eve of Francis Drake's celebrated invasion in 1585, it had a balanced defensive system in place that included forts with garrisons, coastal patrols, and armed convoys and intelligence collection. Although the system did have weaknesses—badly deteriorated coastal galleys, defectively designed fortifications that were inadequately armed and manned, and small and poorly equipped militias—the cost of improving it substantially without greater provocation would probably have exceeded any resulting benefits.

Because the wealth of Brazil was revealed more slowly, Portugal faced a much smaller military threat from European rivals. Much of the first brazilwood exported from Brazil was ultimately consumed in France. As a result, merchants and mariners from Normandy and Rouen began to frequent Brazil's coast. They both traded directly with the Indians for dyewood and raided Portuguese ships. By the 1530s both the Portuguese and French were allied with traditional Indian rivals. This French threat led King John III to encourage active settlement. A dramatic rise in immigrants followed. Nearly forty years of frontier warfare and Indian attacks resulted from this rivalry. Yet France was unwilling to invest significant military assets in this struggle, at least in part because it regarded Portugal as a potential ally against Spain. Finally, in 1560 France's major Brazilian settlement at Rio de Janeiro fell.

The Portuguese and French were the first to breach Spain's trade monopoly. The English followed in 1562 when John Hawkins sought to introduce slaves and merchandise into the Indies. Denied permission to trade legally, he turned to contraband. Early success gave way to disaster, however, when the incoming Spanish fleet trapped his fleet off Vera Cruz. This experience demonstrated that Spain would deal harshly with any foreigner in American waters and tended to promote piracy rather than contraband.

As the career of the most celebrated sixteenth-century interloper, Francis Drake, illustrated, piracy could be both profitable and respectable. Drake's exploits eventually won him wealth and a knighthood from a grateful Queen Elizabeth I. Originally an illicit trader, "El Draque" turned to privateering after Hawkins's fleet was captured. In 1572 he reached the Caribbean with some seventy men and two ships. Supported by runaway slaves, he seized three mule trains laden with Peruvian silver as they neared Nombre de Dios. Emboldened and enriched by his success, Drake circumnavigated the globe in 1577–80, terrorizing the Pacific settlements on his way. He returned to the Caribbean in 1585 with an invasion force of more than

20 ships and over 2,500 men. His plan to attack Santo Domingo, Cartagena, Nombre de Dios, Panama, and Havana and to secure Cartagena and Havana with permanent garrisons, however, failed. Santo Domingo's capture produced only modest plunder and ransom. Cartagena fell too, but casualties and loss of manpower from disease aborted Drake's ambitious plan. He abandoned the city but later destroyed the fortifications under construction at St. Augustine. He returned to England where in 1588 he participated in the English victory over the Spanish Armada.

Drake's unprecedented invasion exposed the vulnerability of the Spanish Indies. Although failing to disrupt permanently the communication and trading system, it partially achieved its general objective of weakening Spain's ability to wage war by forcing Philip II to spend a greater proportion of American revenue on defense. He ordered military engineers to develop a comprehensive plan for fortifying the Caribbean ports, always the most likely targets for enemy attacks. Construction followed in fits and starts, depending on the intensity of the military threats, but eventually the most important ports of the Caribbean and Spanish Main were fortified.

The Treaty of London in 1604 ended the conflict between Spain and England and brought to a close the age of Drake, who had died in 1596 off the coast of Veragua during a final expedition stymied by the revitalized Spanish defenses. Although French and English efforts to break Spain's hold on trade and territory in the Indies had been generally unsuccessful, the treaty embodied a principle that would underpin changes in the new century. A weakened and financially troubled Spain acquiesced to abridgment of its claims as set forth in the Treaty of Tordesillas. Henceforth, "effective occupation" would provide legal justification for non-Iberian countries that planted colonies in the New World.

Dutch Threats in the Caribbean and Brazil

The Dutch largely determined the course of events in the Americas between the Treaty of London and the glory days of the buccaneers. Their belligerence had deep historical roots. A part of Charles I's Burgundian inheritance, the Netherlands rebelled starting in the 1560s. This costly conflict continued, save for the Twelve-Years' Truce (1609–21), until the Treaty of Munster in 1648, when Spain recognized the country's independence. In the New World, Dutch interlopers appeared before 1600 and occupied part of Guiana in 1616. Founded in 1621, the Dutch West Indies Company increased the threat to Spain, as it sought territory as well as booty. A major Dutch expedition on the Pacific coast caused near panic in Peru in 1624. In 1628 Piet Heyn seized an entire Spanish treasure fleet off Cuba in a spectacular and unprecedented exploit that brought agony to the Spaniards and an extraordinary dividend to company stockholders. The Portuguese Empire, however, suffered most from the company's attacks.

King Sebastian of Portugal died on a disastrous and misguided invasion of Morocco in 1578, without leaving a direct heir. Philip II of Spain successfully claimed the throne in 1580, and his heirs retained it until 1640. Even though Philip treated Portugal as a separate kingdom and employed only Portuguese advisers

and officials, Spain's enemies moved quickly to include these new territories within the orbit of their ambition. Portugal's far-flung possessions in Africa, the Far East, and the Americas soon felt Dutch military pressure.

The Dutch West Indies Company attacked Brazil for its sugar production and also because it was perceived to be a weak link among Spain's possessions. After briefly holding Salvador in 1624–25, the Dutch later returned to Brazil in force. They took Pernambuco in 1630 and expanded their control over much of the rich sugar-producing region. Occupation by Protestant heretics and a declining yield from sugar, however, were more than the Catholic natives could bear. In 1645 Brazilians of all races and classes rose against the intruders in a revolt that did not end until January 1654, with the surrender of Recife and the remaining Dutch possessions.

While establishing their colony at Essequibo and meddling in Brazil, the Dutch took the Caribbean islands of Curaçao, St. Martin, and St. Eustatius. Dutch pressure on Spanish shipping and defenses also facilitated the establishment of foreign settlements on other islands Spain had left unoccupied. Already in 1605 Spain had forced its settlers in northwestern Española to abandon the region. In the 1620s and 1630s, the English occupied parts of Nevis and St. Kitts, Barbados, Antigua, and Montserrat. The French seized Martinique and Guadeloupe and the remainder of St. Kitts. In the early seventeenth century as well, the Dutch, English, and French founded settlements in Virginia, New York, Massachusetts, and Canada in North America. Taken in 1655 as a consolation prize following an unsuccessful formal military invasion in the Caribbean sent by Oliver Cromwell, Jamaica became an important English possession in the West Indies. The island soon produced sugar for export, and its capital, Port Royal, became a major center for contraband and for several decades served as a base for English buccaneers.

The Age of Buccaneers

The Spanish abandonment of northwestern Española left a vacuum filled by growing numbers of cattle and swine. A few renegades, escaped slaves, and smugglers remained to collect the meat and hides. Their successors found attacking Spanish shipping and coastal towns more profitable. Originally called "cow killers" by the English and *flibustiers* (filibusters) by the French, these men are best known as "buccaneers" because of their use of a *boucan*, or grill, for roasting meat over a fire. A contemporary described them as

dressed in a pair of drawers and a shirt at the most, shod with the skin of a hog's leg fastened on the top, and behind the foot with strips of the same skin, girded round the middle of their body with a sack which served them to sleep in. . . . When they returned from the chase to the *boucan*, you would say that these are the butcher's vilest servants who had been eight days in the slaughterhouse without washing themselves. I have seen some who had lived this miserable life for twenty years without seeing a priest and without eating bread.²

By 1630, similar groups had formed on nearby Tortuga. Spain's repeated efforts to end attacks on shipping by the buccaneers were never more than temporarily successful.

Major Spanish naval losses encouraged the buccaneers' exploits. The defeat of the Spanish fleet carrying reinforcements for troops in Flanders at the Downs in 1639 and a later disastrous loss of a combined Spanish and Portuguese fleet to the Dutch at Itamaracá off Pernambuco in early 1640 nearly destroyed Spain's once-great navy. Spain's inability to clear buccaneers and contraband traders from the Caribbean coincided with the reduction in the size and frequency of its trading fleets. Even coastal settlements were raided repeatedly by buccaneers seeking treasure and demanding ransom. By the early 1660s, there were some 1,500 to 2,000 buccaneers, with Port Royal, Jamaica, serving as their primary base. Among them was the Welshman Henry Morgan, one of the most successful, notorious, and cruel of these pirates.

Morgan's profitable attack on the unsuspecting interior town of Granada, Nicaragua, in 1665 served as a rehearsal for his bold attack on Portobelo in 1668. With some 400 Englishmen, he struck the port city from the undefended interior side. After capturing the defensive fortifications, the force began two weeks of looting that yielded over 250,000 pesos, silks, linen, other European merchandise, and the finest guns the Spaniards had mounted in the forts. The following year Morgan raided the Gulf of Maracaibo, Venezuela, but because French filibusters had pillaged the region thoroughly in 1667, the pickings were slim. A surprise attack on three Spanish warships sent to trap him as he left the Gulf, however, augmented his coffers. The imaginative corsair's greatest victory occurred in January 1671. With a combined force of nearly 1,500 English and French buccaneers, he led a nine-day trek across the Isthmus of Panama to attack its capital. Victorious once more, the assailants subjected the inhabitants to four weeks of pillage, rapine, and torture unprecedented in length and viciousness. By the time they left, Panama City had been totally destroyed by fire; when rebuilt, it was located on a new site. Morgan returned to Port Royal with loot and honor. He received commendation from the Council of Jamaica and ultimately knighthood and employment as lieutenant-governor of the island.

Morgan's sack of Panama was the last great English buccaneer raid. In the 1670 Treaty of Madrid, Spain officially recognized the English presence in the Caribbean, and both parties agreed to revoke letters of marque and reprisal to reduce piracy. Enforcement was initially sporadic, but England's recognition that profits from trade ultimately were more valuable than the buccaneers' booty led to more peaceful relations. The French buccaneers continued raiding from their base in Tortuga and gradually moved into part of Española. This led to the effective Spanish cession of the western half of the island to France, by the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697. With this treaty the era of the buccaneers at last drew to a close, and the economic development of the Greater Antilles could proceed.

The Defense of the Pacific Coast

In addition to the Caribbean, Spanish Main, and Atlantic coast of South America, the Pacific coast had to be defended. From the first expedition by the English pirate John Oxenham in 1575 until the mid-eighteenth century,

English, Dutch, and French interlopers bedeviled Pacific coastal towns and shipping. By 1742 armed foreign contraband traders, privateers, and pirates had appeared on the Pacific coast of Central America or Mexico at least twenty-five times. Many of these expeditions also landed on the Pacific coast of South America. Above all else, these interlopers were drawn by the fabulous wealth carried by the Peruvian silver fleet to Panama and the Manila galleon from Acapulco to the Philippines.

Drake captured several ships off South America in 1578-79, including one with fourteen chests of silver pesos, eighty pounds of gold, and twenty-six tons of silver bars, as well as pearls and jewels. To prevent a repetition, Viceroy Toledo initiated a convoy system to escort the silver from Lima to Panama. The raids of Thomas Cavendish in 1587, although yielding little booty from Peru, reemphasized the threat from the sea and prompted expanded protection of the silver fleet.

The Dutch sent major expeditions to the Pacific coast in the 1610s and 1620s. One in 1615 defeated the Spanish Pacific fleet off Cañete, Peru, and razed Paita. It failed, however, to capture either the Peruvian silver fleet or the Manila galleon. A large expedition that reached the Peruvian coast in 1624 intended not only to trade and raid but also to establish a colony. Although it destroyed Guayaquil, it too failed in its primary objectives. In response to these threats, the Spanish began to fortify Acapulco in 1616 and to strengthen the Pacific fleet.

Less frequent trade fairs at Portobelo meant fewer sailings to Panama and fewer naval vessels for the Pacific fleet. But even these reduced needs were hard to fulfill, despite greatly decreased remittances to Spain, because of declining revenue in Peru. Coastal defense needs, however, had increased, owing to attacks by buccaneers who, following Morgan's example, crossed the Isthmus of Panama in pursuit of booty. From 1680 to 1690, English buccaneers caused enormous havoc from Panama to Chile. By the end of 1686, they had captured almost two thirds of the Pacific merchant fleet. Faced with immense losses should the raiding continue, the Lima merchant guild funded the arming of merchant ships to protect the coast. This continued into the more peaceful decades of the early eighteenth century. Only after the terrible earthquake of 1746 destroyed Callao and severely damaged the ships at port did the Crown send warships to Peru. They were removed in 1748 following the peace with England.

On the Pacific coast of New Spain, buccaneer depredations provoked the use of a small permanent defense fleet beginning in 1690. The major concern, however, remained the protection of the Manila galleon. In 1710 an expedition by Captain Woodes Rogers captured the smaller of two galleons. The final noteworthy attack on the Pacific coast occurred in 1741 when Commodore George Anson led an English naval squadron into the Pacific and seized eleven Spanish vessels off the South American coast. He then crossed the Pacific to the Philippines, where he captured the westbound galleon carrying 1.5 million pesos. Only in 1762, during the Seven Years' War, would Spain lose another galleon to the English.

Soldiers, Militias, and the Cost of Defense

Few full-time soldiers served in the Spanish colonies before the British capture of Havana in 1762. Small forces served as viceregal guards. Troops were stationed in garrisons at fortified coastal ports and towns and in *presidios*, or frontier military outposts, in northern New Spain, southern Chile, and the frontier zones of the Río de la Plata, where they fought against unconquered and rebellious Indians. Taken together, the regulars totaled only several thousand men.

The Crown relied on militia, rather than regular troops, when threatened by attack from the mid-sixteenth century onward. In 1540 the Crown required all able-bodied men to serve if called. At first the size of the white male population determined the number of available men, but eventually colonial authorities called on *mestizos*, free blacks, mulattos, and even Indians for militia service. The colored militia in Lima performed so well during the Dutch threat in 1624 that its members won an exemption from tribute as a reward.

However many men were available for militia service, the Spanish government had a constant problem of supplying them with adequate weapons and ammunition. Royal strictures limited the importation of weapons by individuals and forced the Crown itself to supply most arms. Sixteenth-century corsairs in the Caribbean were regularly better armed than the militia, although the militiamen's preference for flight and preservation of life and property reduced the significance of their inferior weaponry and frequent shortage of powder. The viceroys of Peru in the seventeenth century repeatedly decried the shortage and poor quality and condition of their firearms.

Government expenditures for defense were modest until the mid-sixteenth century but then increased rapidly. By 1640 the Mexican treasuries were spending a third or more of their revenues on defense, as they provided heavy subsidies to the Caribbean and Philippines as well as for the defense of Mexico itself. By the late seventeenth century, military expenditures regularly exceeded the treasuries' remission of bullion to Spain. Spending far more on defense than they were remitting to Castile in the mid-seventeenth century, viceroys of Peru watched their defensive needs increase relentlessly in the 1670s and 1680s while regular revenues were declining. In the first full year of the War of Jenkins' Ear, regular defensive expenditures consumed 57 percent of the Lima treasury's income, and extraordinary expenditures pushed the total to 85 percent, or 1.2 million pesos. Defending the empire was expensive, but not defending it was unthinkable.

The empire in general and its trade and bullion shipments to Spain in particular were vital to the Spanish Crown. Judged by the retention of New World territory on the one hand and the rare loss of a treasure fleet on the other, royal defensive policy was generally successful. Yet Spain won innumerable individual battles at a cost of losing political hegemony in the Old World and commercial domination in the New. Its fronts were too many and its resources, too thin to achieve victory. Every peso spent on defense in the Americas was one less available for expenditure in Europe; conversely, the court's constant demand for bullion forced New World officials to sacrifice military preparedness despite the constant

expenditures. Ironically, even though Spain's power was waning on both sides of the Atlantic during much of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the greater retention and expenditure of royal revenue in the New World mitigated the government's financial demands and increased the colonies' self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

THE COLONIAL ECONOMY

The form and pace of economic development in colonial Latin America also helped determine both its social and political structures. Colonialism, of course, is a form of political subordination, but in the Latin American case the economy was often more important in forming a new social order from the remnants of indigenous culture and the migratory flows from Europe and Africa than were the institutions of empire. The geographic distribution of population, the class structure, and a legacy of state intervention in production and distribution all have roots in the colonial economy.

Conquest and the Indigenous Economy

European conquest and early settlement took a heavy toll on the indigenous economies of the Western Hemisphere. The destruction of Tenochtitlan, Cuzco, and other cities not only destroyed accumulated wealth in the form of public and private buildings but also disrupted traditional exchange relationships that encouraged specialized production and distribution. In addition, Iberians expropriated precious metals and other luxury goods. Because they invested very little in the colonial economy, Europe, not America, gained the economic benefits of this lost wealth. The conquest also wasted substantial human capital, the productive potential of skills and experience. The skilled sectors of Indian society—urban artisans, priests, and administrators—suffered the most in loss of life and forced migration in the aftermath of conquest, and the productivity of the Indian communities showed this. Epidemic disease, however, was what most affected the Indians' economic performance, and the collapse of the Indian population led to an equally large drop in their production and consumption.

Because the indigenous cultures of Brazil had not developed the levels of specialization and integration found in Mesoamerica and the Andean zone, the scale of postconquest contraction was reduced. Yet the near collapse of indigenous production that resulted from military action and disease contributed to the famines of the sixteenth century. Even without mineral wealth, European settlement remained confiscatory through the imposition of forced labor and slavery.

Despite the conquest's damage to the Indian population in Spanish America, important changes in the years before the major mining strikes of the 1540s set the stage for future growth. European technology and skills, new crops, new animal species that provided locomotion and food, and the flow of immigrants from Europe and Africa all contributed to Spanish America's ability to produce wealth. The new colonial system created larger, more unified trading systems that

connected local producers to growing Atlantic and world markets, and the introduction of European monetary and credit mechanisms enabled some to reach these regional and international markets. It was mineral wealth, however, that defined the fundamental character of the Mexican and Peruvian economies in the same way that plantation agriculture did for Brazil and, later, the Spanish colonies of the circum-Caribbean.

The concentration of resources at the silver mining centers of Mexico and Peru and the sugar-producing regions of Brazil encouraged agriculture, grazing, and manufacturing in adjacent areas. The founding of colonial cities and the development of transportation networks also reflected the special needs of these mining and plantation districts. On the periphery of these central economic zones, regionally significant economic activities like the production of cochineal in northern Oaxaca, cacao in Venezuela, and indigo in Central America helped guide the development of urban networks. The early development of these local export economies then influenced the distribution of colonial population and wealth.

The Greater Peruvian Region

The silver mines at Potosí profoundly affected the economy of much of South America. The introduction of the amalgamation process in 1572 led to silver production's quintupling between 1571 and 1575; it continued to climb until the early 1590s. The population grew even faster. Potosí had 3,000 inhabitants in the 1540s, a reported 120,000 in 1580, and perhaps 160,000 in 1650. Its size and economic influence were unparalleled in the Americas and perhaps equal to those of contemporary London. The mining center gave form and direction to the economic potential of a region that included the Argentine pampas, the central valleys of Chile, coastal Peru, and Ecuador.

The region around Potosí could meet only a small fraction of the city's needs. As a result, a vast area entered Potosí's economic orbit in the boom years of the late sixteenth century. Tucumán in northwestern Argentina experienced two separate cycles of integration. In the 1580s it sent to the mines cotton textiles produced on native looms. After early profits, local *encomenderos* bought European looms and built *obrajes* staffed by Indians. The region also produced woolen cloth after the introduction of sheep. This precocious manufacturing industry was faltering by the 1620s, however, when other regions with competitive advantages entered the Potosí market.

The grazing industry, nonetheless, kept the jurisdiction of Tucumán tied to Potosí. Through the annual livestock fair at Salta, the region sent thousands of mules, oxen, cattle, and horses to provide food and traction for the mines. This trade grew from 7,050 head in 1596–1600 to a peak of 69,027 in 1681–85. This distant region's economy depended almost completely on the performance of the Potosí mines.

Other regions and economic sectors also followed this pattern. The economy of Lima was closely tied to the meteoric growth and later slow decline of Potosí. When Potosí's production began to decline after 1592, increases in silver

production for the viceroyalty as a whole muted the effects until the 1640s, when a drop began that continued almost without respite until the early eighteenth century. Silver went overland from Potosí to the port of Arica and then by ship to Lima/Callao. Because after 1613 the Lima *consulado* exercised monopoly power in the import-export market, miners were at a disadvantage when they exchanged silver for European goods. The profits from this unequal exchange as well as the tax revenues sent to the capital from provincial treasuries gave life to Lima, fueling the opulent display of its elite and sustaining its commerce.

The growth of Lima, founded in 1535, to a population of some 25,000 in 1610 and perhaps 75,000 by the early 1680s stimulated market agriculture and manufacturing along the Peruvian coast and in Chile. *Limeños* in 1630 consumed more than 150,000 bushels of wheat, 75,000 pounds of sugar, 25,000 head of sheep and goats, 3,500 cattle, and over 200,000 jugs of wine. Olive oil, cheese, almonds, honey, and hundreds of other local and regional products also found a place in its markets. High-quality European textiles, iron goods, books, and other luxury items faced little competition in this market. Cheaper imported textiles, furniture, pottery, and agricultural products such as wine and olive oil, however, met increasing colonial competition.

Potosí and, especially after 1687, Lima, depended on distant food producers. A major earthquake in 1687 lowered grain production near Lima and gave Chile an essential place in the city's market. Ships built in Guayaquil and owned by Lima merchants tied Chile's wheat fields to Peru's urban consumers. Potosí received most of its food from Cochabamba, but wine, olive oil, and later brandy were carried across the mountains from Arequipa and the coastal plain. Potosí's populace also consumed large quantities of *yerba*, tea from Paraguay, and coca leaves from the Upper Peruvian *yungas*.

Other distant manufacturers also benefited from the Potosí market. The mines' large population of permanent and temporary laborers created a profitable market for cotton and wool textiles. The *obrajes* of Tucumán, Cuzco, Trujillo, Cajamarca, and especially Quito produced cloth for this market throughout much of the colonial period.

During most of the seventeenth century more than 10,000 workers were employed in *obrajes* in Ecuador. Some slaves and convicts worked in these primitive mills, but Indian *mita* laborers supplied most of the labor. Although Spanish law classified these workers as free and required that they receive wages, *obraje* owners commonly used debt peonage and coercion to maintain a permanent, inexpensive workforce. Responding to the dynamic growth of the textile industry, the surrounding region increasingly specialized in sheep raising and related tasks—shearing, cleaning, carding, and spinning. By the late seventeenth century, a textile industry dependent largely on the Potosí market dominated Quito's economy.

The economic history of Potosí's vast region of influence can best be understood by the cycle of its silver production. During the period of expansion, the high prices for goods at Potosí awakened the economic potential of an enormous area. Producers in distant regions could profit from supplying this market despite high transportation costs. The resulting competition among producers drove down

prices and pushed less profitable participants toward other types of production, as in the case of Córdoba, which moved from textiles and agriculture to grazing.

After 1592 silver production at Potosí began a long downward trend that worsened substantially after 1640 and continued into the eighteenth century. Although its production, even during its most disastrous years of the seventeenth century, compared favorably with the best yields of Zacatecas at the time, Potosí's decline rippled through the regional economy and exacerbated competition among its suppliers by reducing demand and depressing prices. Mule prices, for example, tumbled over 80 percent from the 1620s to the end of the century. Falling prices and declining profits affected all parts of society, but the weight fell disproportionately on the colonial workers, especially the Indian masses. The colonial elite, squeezed by the declining demand, used its economic and political power to maintain profits by transferring costs to the Indians. The most effective device developed to sustain their profits was the *repartimiento de bienes*. Not surprisingly, the most common goods in this trade were mules and colonial textiles, two products hit hard by the shrinking demand at Potosí.

Mexico and the Circum-Caribbean

The silver mines of Mexico played a similar role in its economic zone, but with several important differences. First, Mexico's silver production increased more gradually than did Peru's and therefore distorted the regional economy less. Mexico's silver production did not exceed Peru's until the 1670s, and only in the 1730s did it surpass the 83 million pesos that Peru had produced a century earlier. Second, the location of the richest mines far from the dense population of central Mexico brought about the mine owners' earlier reliance on wage laborers. This difference in the labor market occasioned a relatively more equitable distribution of wealth and promoted a greater investment in production for the domestic market. Finally, Mexico's economy did not share Peru's isolation. Its producers were more successful in seeking European markets for exports other than silver.

After the conquest and following dissipation of much of its booty, Cortés and others sought means of making the new colony pay. The labor and commodity tributes of the *encomienda* allowed Spanish settlers to force Indian producers into new market relationships. Within two decades a colonial commercial system had appeared: nearly without exception, the products were traditional, and the producers were Indians. New towns—particularly Puebla and the mining camps of the northern frontier—and the newly rebuilt Mexico City provided ready markets for both traditional and European food crops, livestock, and local artisan production. Because the Spaniards controlled marketing and could hold down labor costs, they were the major beneficiaries of the expanding markets.

By the early 1560s, exports from Mexico and Central America were in a period of dynamic expansion, and by the end of the century their cyclical behavior largely determined the rhythm of the regional economy. Silver mining led this growth and also aided the domestic economy by contributing to a dramatic increase in the money supply. This, in turn, encouraged investment in production and helped direct labor toward the most profitable areas of the economy.

Dyes were the nonmineral exports with the largest market. Some precious and semiprecious stones, medicinal plants, and other products also were exported in small amounts. Cochineal, a red dye made from insects cultivated on the nopal cactus, remained an important export until the end of the colonial period. *Encomenderos* required their Indians to supply cochineal as tribute, diverting it from domestic consumers and into the export market, although most production remained under the control of the Indian communities. Despite strong demands for cochineal, requirements of climate and limited labor skills slowed its growth. Epidemic disease and the spread of European livestock in the Valley of Mexico gave northern Oaxaca undisputed domination of this market by the seventeenth century.



A cochineal plantation in Oaxaca. A brilliant red dye was produced from insects that infested the cacti.

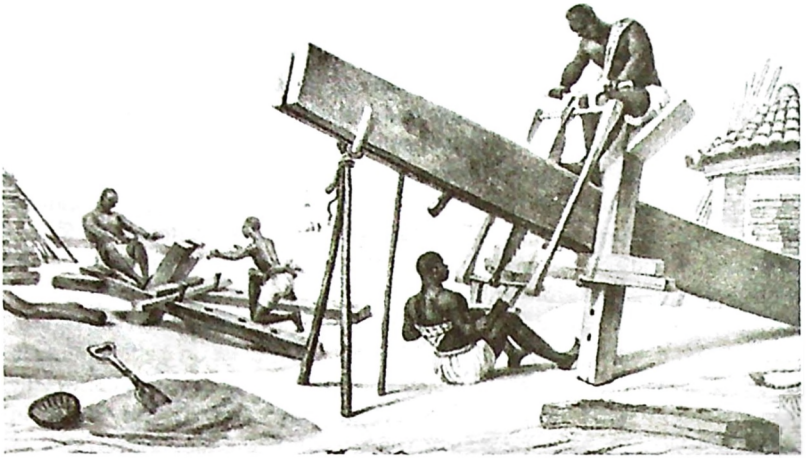
Indigo, a blue vegetable dye, was the principal Central American export by 1600, although Yucatan was also an important producer. Indigo was a more "typical" colonial product than cochineal was; its producers faced stiff competition in the European market from similar products imported from other regions and rarely found prices stable. Forced Indian labor was common in indigo production, but *castas* and black slaves held many of the skilled jobs.

The presence of the largest white and Hispanicized nonwhite population in Spanish America joined with a dynamic silver industry to create a diversified regional economy in Mexico. In the areas surrounding the silver mining centers of northern New Spain and the great urban center of Mexico City, market agriculture and grazing developed quickly. Wheat for the Spaniards and *castas*, maize for the lower classes, and a broad range of other rural products, from the intoxicant *pulque* to olive oil, found ready consumers. An enormous livestock industry also supplied the mules, oxen, and horses that tied together the major population centers, provided essential traction at the mines, and produced the hides used ubiquitously in an age without plastic. Although the domestic markets were somewhat less volatile than the export sector, the fortunes of rural producers generally rose and fell in response to changes in silver production and the size of the mining centers.

Manufacturing in colonial Mexico took two forms, the *obraje* and traditional artisan production. Textile *obrajes* were major employers in Querétaro, Oaxaca, and Puebla. Puebla's textile industry, in fact, remained competitive with imports even after independence. Mexican *obrajes* also produced pottery. Artisans provided consumer goods and industrial products ranging from luxury items to tools and implements for mines and farms. But both forms of colonial production found their markets limited, as wealthier private consumers generally preferred European goods, and by the eighteenth century many European producers actually enjoyed a price advantage, owing to the development of the factory system. The *obrajes* survived, therefore, by targeting lower-class consumers and using the cheapest workers available—*repartimiento* laborers, convicts, and debt peons. Artisans compensated for their high production costs by providing individualized goods—jewelry, silverware, luxury clothing, coaches, and furniture—or specialized products for the mining and transportation industries.

Mexico was also the center of an important intercolonial commercial network. Wheat from the Puebla region found a market in Cuba. Central America relied on Mexican textiles, exporting livestock in return. However, cacao, or chocolate, a beverage once restricted to the Mesoamerican elite, was the preeminent product in this regional trading system. The conquest destroyed the indigenous elite's ability to enforce taboos against the lower class's consumption of cacao, and the Spanish *encomenderos* profited from this previously suppressed market. As consumption grew beyond the capacity of the traditional suppliers, new areas of production opened up.

Guatemala experienced an early cacao boom that peaked in the 1570s, owing to the decline in Central America's Indian population that helped create an opportunity for Guayaquil and Venezuela. But the Crown damaged Guayaquil's initial



Carpenters in colonial Brazil prepare lumber to be used in ship construction.

hold on the Mexican market when in 1631 it banned trade between Mexico and Peru to stop the flow of Peruvian silver to Asia. Although some Guayaquil cacao continued to enter Mexico by overland routes, from the 1630s into the eighteenth century, Venezuela controlled this profitable market. Exports rose from 90 bushels in 1622 to nearly 15,000 bushels forty years later and peaked in 1722 at 40,000 bushels. Although Mexico sent to Venezuela wheat and textiles in return, it maintained the balance of trade principally with silver.

Brazil and the Río de la Plata Region

After the desultory decades in which dyewood was Brazil's major export, sugar production took hold, and Brazil's economic history effectively began. Victory over the Indians of the northeastern coastal region gave planters a supply of cheap, if inefficient, slave labor. By the 1570s the planters had enough investment capital and labor to give Brazilian sugar an important share of the European market. Production grew rapidly until the Dutch seized Pernambuco, the major sugar-growing region, in 1630. During the quarter-century of occupation, Bahia emerged as the primary producer, a position it generally retained until the nineteenth century. After the expulsion of the Dutch in 1654, cyclical expansions and contractions resulted from disruptions in Atlantic trade and from new competition from Dutch, English, and French colonies in the Caribbean. Although there were interludes of prosperity after the mid-seventeenth century, sugar prices frequently were too low to match the generally rising price of African slaves. The discovery of gold in the

1690s and the subsequent mining boom exacerbated this serious problem for an industry already in economic trouble.

Even after the discovery of gold and diamonds, sugar remained the most important Brazilian export until the nineteenth century and continued to tie Brazil to Europe and less directly to Africa and Asia. It passed through Portugal to the Low Countries, England, and other European countries, where it was exchanged for textiles and manufactured goods. Rum, tobacco, and other colonial products helped pay for slaves imported from Africa. Even an indirect Brazilian trade with Asia was sustained by Portuguese ships occasionally putting in at major ports to exchange spices and silks for sugar. As was true in the mining-dominated colonies of the Spanish Empire, merchants tied to Atlantic trade eventually gained ascendancy over producers. The planters' indebtedness to the merchants limited investment in production and, coupled with the heavy taxation of sugar, reduced Brazil's competitiveness as the production of Caribbean plantations both reduced markets in England and France and competed for sales elsewhere in Europe.

The sugar industry promoted the production and distribution of other goods and services. The costly refining equipment and slave labor of the sugar plantations required high production levels of cane in order to make a profit. As a result, few plantations were self-sufficient in food or livestock. Thus, the interior of the northeast and large areas of the southern coastal zone profitably produced manioc, maize, wheat, and livestock for plantation and urban consumption. As sugar exports rose, the regions economically tied to the northeastern plantation zone expanded. Eventually dried beef and other animal products from as far away as Buenos Aires entered this market. The concentrated nature and coastal location of the sugar industry further augmented this trade network. The plantation belt—indeed nearly all settlement in Brazil until the eighteenth century—was located along a narrow coastal strip that allowed distant producers to gain access to maritime shipping, thus avoiding the high overland transportation costs of the mining industries. It required the mining boom of the late seventeenth century to draw labor and capital into the Brazilian interior and create additional markets for regional producers.

Brazil was also linked to the Potosí mining complex through Buenos Aires. European goods and African slaves imported illegally via Brazil and Buenos Aires were cheaper at the mines than were those carried on the longer and more costly legal route via Panama. The rich profits of this trade were particularly important to Brazil, as it suffered a chronic shortage of specie until the discovery of gold. When Spain moved to cut off this hemorrhage of silver by creating new interior customs barriers at Salta and Jujuy in the 1670s, Portugal founded, as a center for contraband, *Colônia do Sacramento* in 1680, across the Río de la Plata from Buenos Aires. Brazil also had commercial links to Venezuela and Paraguay, exchanging European goods for cacao and *yerba*. The collapse of the Spanish fleet system and a decline in registered silver exports from Spanish America in the seventeenth century helped contribute to a more integrated American commercial system, of which Brazil's ties to Potosí and the grazing frontiers of the Río de la Plata and Venezuela were a part.

Obstacles to Economic Development

The colonies of Latin America were dependent on economically weak European metropolises. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, more dynamic economies in northern Europe eclipsed the economies of Spain and Portugal. As the colonies' needs for capital and technology grew after 1550, both Iberian nations began a long period of economic decline. Spanish authorities, in particular, attempted to compensate for the weakened home economy by increasing colonial taxes and legislating, often ineffectively, against American production of items that competed with Spanish exports; the colonial production of silk, olive oil, and wine, for example, was banned at various times. In addition, although some commentators in Iberia complained that emigration was damaging both Spain and Portugal, the colonies received too few skilled settlers to transfer the full range of European technology and skill.

A related problem was the development of a large public sector in both empires. Although the size and cost of the colonial bureaucracies were modest by modern standards, the costs of taxes and government intervention were substantial. Bureaucrats actively intervened in the colonial economies to drain capital from production and promote consumption; to the extent this consumption took place in Iberia, its effects damaged the New World economy. Import and export taxes, the tithe on rural production, and mining taxes all steered wealth away from mines, plantations, and farms to urban administrative centers, defensive installations, and naval forces protecting Atlantic shipping.

Other obstacles also hindered economic development. The colonies' chronic trade deficit with the metropolitan countries left them perpetually short of specie, despite the bullion production of Peru and Mexico. Inadequate monetary resources, particularly in Brazil before the discovery of gold and in colonies outside the silver mining regions of Spanish America, inhibited growth in domestic and regional markets. A shortage of credit caused by the tardy development of banking and joint-stock companies worsened the problem. In the absence of banking services, wholesale merchants and religious institutions were the only sources of investment capital. The conservatism of these lenders pushed capital toward rural enterprises or real estate, for they provided land and buildings as collateral, and away from investment in new technology, especially in manufacturing. Finally, substantial amounts of capital were used to establish and maintain the colonial Church.

Geography also raised grave obstacles to economic development. Extremely rugged terrain separated the great mining centers of Mexico and Peru from populous commercial centers. Mountains, jungles, and deserts presented natural barriers to human enterprise. European goods unloaded in Buenos Aires had to travel more than 1,000 miles on unimproved road before reaching Potosí, and this route was less difficult than the one from Arica. Freight carried from Quito to Guayaquil passed along a dangerous stretch of muddy road. In 1590 the engineer Juan Bautista Antoneli called the strategically important mule trail that connected Panama City with Nombre de Dios the "filthiest way in the world." Because few

navigable rivers linked the major population centers, mules, humans, and, in flat terrain, ox carts moved the colonial produce. The resulting high transportation costs limited the profitability of both domestic and export production.

Despite the many obstacles, Latin America's colonial economies produced a wide variety of goods and distributed them, according to demand and competition, through local, regional, and international markets. The collective energy, initiative, and creativity of individuals were ultimately responsible for the region's achievements, and individuals as well suffered the consequences of economic failures.

NOTES

1. C. R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415–1825* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1969), p. 224.
2. Arthur P. Newton, *The European Nations in the West Indies, 1493–1688* (London: A. & C. Black, 1933), p. 170.

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CHAPTER 6

The Social Economy

Societies of Caste and Class

CHRONOLOGY

- 1526-1600 Sixteen Americans made knights of a Spanish military order
- 1549 Mulattos, *mestizos*, and persons of illegitimate birth prohibited from holding *encomiendas* or royal offices
- 1552 Blacks in Peru prohibited from carrying swords, knives, or daggers
- 1554 Crown recognizes need to house and educate *mestizos* and *mestizas*
- 1555 Relatives of *audiencia* ministers forbidden appointments as *corregidores* to limit corruption
- 1568 *Mestizos* prohibited from receiving ordination as priests; blacks, mulattos, and *mestizos* prohibited from living with Indians
- 1574 Free blacks and mulattos compelled to pay tribute
- 1575 *Audiencia* ministers and their children prohibited from marrying in district
- 1587 Spaniards, blacks, mulattos, and *mestizos* forbidden residence in Indian villages
- 1588 Crown allows *mestizos* of legitimate birth to be ordained
- 1589 Blacks and mulattos barred from having Indian servants
- 1599 *Mestizos* prohibited from becoming notaries (*escribanos*)
- 1600 Spaniards prohibited from living in Indian villages
- 1602 First title of nobility in Peru other than that received by Francisco Pizarro in 1537
- 1609 First title of nobility in New Spain other than for Fernando Cortés (1529) and Miguel López de Legazpi (1569), founder of the Spanish colony in the Philippines
- 1627 Title "Conde de Moctezuma" granted to great-grandson of Aztec emperor Moctezuma II
- 1627 *Audiencia* ministers forbidden to be godfathers of anyone whose case might come before them
- 1631 Imposition of *media anata* on royal officeholders
- 1676 Indians to reside in their designated districts in cities
- 1690s Triumph of *paulistas* over fugitive slave community (*quilombo*) of Palmares, Brazil
- 1767 Segregation of natives to apply only in mission districts

EVOLUTION OF COLONIAL SOCIETIES

The formation of colonial society occurred within a context of rapid and profound demographic and economic change. The initial simplicity of a social order created by conquest could not endure, despite the efforts of the conquerors, some colonial administrators and churchmen who sought to protect their advantages. As time passed, social arrangements proliferated, and some beneficiaries of the conquest lost ground to new groups. The social categories and economic arrangements established in the early decades after the conquest were challenged by native population decline, the arrival of thousands of new European immigrants, the development of the African slave trade, and the rapid growth of a racially mixed population.

To sixteenth-century Iberians, a properly ordered society was hierarchical, with power, wealth, and status all concentrated at the top. They neither believed in human equality nor had any enthusiasm for promoting social mobility. Nevertheless, these new colonial societies proved to be more fluid, more susceptible to mobility, than were Spain and Portugal. Both societies were divided into three estates—nobles, clerics, and commoners. The first two estates enjoyed special privileges called *fueros*, such as tax exemptions and special judicial rights, which separated them from commoners who made up over 90 percent of the population. Corporate bodies, including the military and universities, also benefited from special *fueros*. In some circumstances, these organizations exercised judicial authority over their members, a concession that could protect them from the authority of the state or other powerful institutions. Artisan guilds, for example, exercised substantial control over their members and enjoyed significant independence from the influence of noblemen and royal bureaucrats.

In the colonies of Spain and Portugal these beliefs and institutional arrangements were acknowledged and at times enforced. But distance from Europe; the mixture of races, ethnicities, and cultures; and the sometimes-tumultuous performance of colonial economies created more fluid and complex "societies of caste." In these societies native peoples, Africans and their American-born descendants, and racial mixtures, *castas*, were defined as inferiors by law and discriminated against in practice. But these were also societies where men and women with substantial property were commonly presumed to be white even if their color or appearance might suggest otherwise. In the first decades of settlement, for example, many of the mixed-race children and grandchildren of conquistadors and native women moved in elite circles and married Europeans. Race was therefore defined largely by wealth, lineage, and power or, alternatively, by poverty and tributary status, rather than narrowly by biology. Yet culture, the mastery of Spanish or Portuguese language, Christianity, mode of dress, and diet also contributed to contemporary attribution of race and ethnic identity.

In the male-dominated Iberian world, law and custom circumscribed the lives of women. Through often-violent relationships with native women, conquistadors and later immigrants from Europe imposed their domination from the start. The lives of elite women and those of the middle groups were closely supervised and

controlled by fathers in their youth and by husbands after marriage. Priests monitored the lives of women who chose the convent. No woman from what colonials considered a "decent" or propertied family could walk unescorted in the street, go to the market, have a job, or visit with a man alone without inviting scandal. Although a handful of wealthy and urban middle-class women were educated privately, only as widows did they achieve any meaningful economic independence. Women who rebelled, fled their homes, defied sexual customs, or resisted the demands of fathers and husbands suffered virtual incarceration in convents, hospitals, or houses of refuge or seclusion (called *recogimientos*). Poor women, many of them single parents, had marginally greater independence from the control of fathers and husbands. Economic necessity meant nearly all worked outside the home. In most colonial cities and towns these independent women dominated petty retailing and markets.

Social status, race, and ethnicity in the Western Hemisphere colonies of Spain and Portugal were all influenced by the workings of local and international economies. The unpredictability and risks of Atlantic commerce increased the vulnerability of all social classes as did the boom-and-bust cycle of the dominant mining and sugar sectors. The profits of a merchant who imported European textiles, the income of a muleteer who moved goods from town to town, the earnings of a mine owner dependent on imported mercury, the profit of a sugar planter exporting to Europe, and the wages of an artisan were all tied to the reliability and volume of trade. Urban economies dominated by commerce and government services produced more dynamic and fluid social structures than did the plantations and *haciendas* of the countryside. While both urban and rural economies relied on large numbers of slaves and exploited indigenous laborers, cities and towns offered greater opportunity for social mobility than did the farms, ranches, and plantations. Manumissions, for example, were much more common among urban slaves than among slaves on plantations. Similarly, Indians permanently resident in cities were far more likely to accumulate property and escape tribute and labor requirements than their rural relatives.

THE ELITES

The great distances separating the major centers of wealth in Spanish America and in Brazil precluded the emergence of a single, politically coherent colonial elite in either empire. Rather, powerful local elites dominated the political, economic, social, and cultural life of each urban core and its surrounding rural area.

Colonial elites were heterogeneous and often interlocking mixes of ranchers, planters, miners, merchants, high-ranking churchmen, and bureaucrats. This class was constantly renewed through intermarriage and the incorporation of successive generations of recently successful entrepreneurs and royal appointees sent from the Old World. Where indigenous peoples survived in large numbers, hereditary native elite lineages survived on the margins of this class, especially in the Andean region.

Most members of the elite pursued activities across economic sectors rather than limiting themselves to a single career or area of investment. For example,

some churchmen and royal officials, barred by law from direct participation in the economy, used kinsmen and friends as frontmen for commercial undertakings. Similarly, many merchants invested commercial profits in mining and agricultural activities. With the exception of high-ranking bureaucrats and churchmen, wealth, influence, family eminence, and social connections were more important than occupational prestige in determining membership in colonial elites. For these dominant social groups, wealth was power.

Few conquistadors and early settlers came from distinguished families that could legitimately boast the Spanish title of *don* or the Portuguese equivalent, *dom*. They assumed, however, that participation in successful conquests had elevated their social status to the level of Iberia's lower nobility. Their heirs born in the New World displayed no reticence in using these terms of honor, asserting that their ancestors had been ennobled through participation in the conquest and settlement of the Indies. This assumption of a de facto noble status (*hidalgo* in Spanish or *fidalgo* in Portuguese) reflected the harsh colonial realities where Europeans saw themselves as superior to native peoples, African slaves, and racially mixed persons, especially those of illegitimate birth. Eventually, the title *don* came into general use among members of the Indian nobility as well, as colonial authorities came to rely on this class to collect taxes and organize native labor drafts.

The wealthiest and most powerful colonists in Spanish America and Brazil imitated the culture of the Iberian nobility, demanding deference from inferiors, living in great houses surrounded by servants, and, whenever possible, following the fashions and styles of Europe. Very few of these local magnates, however, sought or received formal titles of nobility. The Spanish Crown bestowed the prestigious title of marquis on both Cortés and Pizarro as a reward for their conquests in Mexico and Peru but subsequently created few noble titles in the colonies. By 1750 it had granted fewer than ninety titles in Peru and only twenty-seven in Mexico. Most of these went to prominent bureaucrats and wealthy individuals who had donated large sums to the royal treasury in times of financial need. Although these titles were typically granted to colonial residents born in Iberia, their American-born offspring routinely inherited them. Thus, as time passed, the titled nobility of Spanish America became increasingly creole. Although the wealthiest sugar planters in Brazil imitated the lifestyle of the Portuguese aristocracy, few sought formal titles of nobility. Knighthood in the Spanish military orders of Santiago, Calatrava, or Alcántara or the Portuguese orders of Christ, Avis, or Santiago confirmed an individual's nobility and was much more common than formal titles, but these honors could not be transmitted to one's heirs.

The legitimacy of the native elites of Mesoamerica and the Andean region was initially recognized by both the conquistadors and the Crown. Cortés and Pizarro tried to advance the process of pacification and Christianization by using captive rulers drawn from native ruling families. While this experiment ended quickly in Mexico, a descendant of the Inka royal lineage was still seeking to defend his hereditary privileges and rights when he died in 1627, as a resident of Spain and

a completely Hispanicized pursuer of royal patronage. Some Spaniards married Indian women of the highest rank to lay claim to traditional tribute and other privileges. As a result, within two generations the upper ranks of the Indian nobility of central Mexico and to a lesser degree Peru were racially mixed and transformed



Portrait of Francisco de Orense y Moctezuma, Count of Villalobos. Some of the marriages between conquistadors and noble native women created elite families that endured until the end of the colonial period. The young count in this painting was descended on his mother's side from Doña Isabel de Moctezuma Tecuichpochtzin, the main female heir of Moctezuma the last ruler of Tenochtitlan.

by Spanish culture. By 1586 the Crown officially discouraged these marriages. The political organization and economic structures of Brazil's indigenous populations were less compatible with the hierarchies imposed by the new colonial order than were those of Mesoamerica and Peru. As a result, few prominent Portuguese settlers married Indian women.

Despite the advantages enjoyed by some Indian lineages in the early colonial period, native royal families and other indigenous nobles lost most of their hereditary importance and wealth as Spanish power grew. The surviving Tlaxcalan nobility in Mexico and the Inka hereditary elite of the Cuzco region were important exceptions to this pattern. Granted formal patents of nobility by Charles I in the 1540s, the Inka nobility, claiming descent from the pre-conquest royal line, continued to exercise significant political and economic power in the eighteenth century. Many ruled rural native communities directly. Others carved out successful careers as urban property owners, merchants, and skilled craftsmen. A small number became priests. Exempted from tribute and labor service and accustomed to privilege and power, this native nobility celebrated its history and conserved many traditional customs while remaining loyal servants of the Spanish king.

Although willing to marginalize the highest levels of the native nobility, the Crown needed the lower ranks of the native elite to survive since they sustained the functioning of colonial labor and fiscal systems. The *caciques* of Mexico, the *batabs* of Yucatan, and the *kurakas* of the Andes, for example, oversaw the collection of tribute payments and labor for the *repartimiento/mita*. These positions were usually held by men and women descended from mid-level native elite families, but increasingly ambitious mixed-race commoners who proved useful to the Spanish or were tied to them by shared economic interests pushed aside the rightful heirs to these positions. Although materially poor relative to much of the Spanish population, these Indian leaders often owned private land and livestock and received exemptions from tribute and labor service. Some were guilty of exploiting and oppressing the poor natives they supervised.

In the Iberian world, *limpieza de sangre* or, in Portuguese, *limpeça de sangue*, the concept of blood purity, was central to Christian identity in general and essential to those who claimed elite identity. Based initially on religious difference, not race, it served to erect a discriminatory bar to the advancement of Jews and Muslims. But, since Spaniards and Portuguese came to believe that this presumed "taint" was inherited biologically by later generations, regardless of an individuals' faith, it functioned in practice as a racial, not narrowly religious, form of discrimination. Lacking *limpieza de sangre*, most "New Christians," practicing Catholics with Jewish or Muslim ancestry, were excluded from offices in Church and state as well as marriage into prominent families.

In Spain's colonies this idea of "unclean" or "infected" blood grew to include Africans, their American-born descendants, mixed-race groups generally, persons of illegitimate birth or uncertain lineage, and, in some places, Indians. In Brazil the terms "infected blood" or "defect of blood" were assigned to those with Jewish or African antecedents, serving as the basis for exclusion from elite organizations

or marriages into elite families. The intention was to grant the offspring of two Spanish or Portuguese parents advantages denied other children. Given the ethnic diversity and social fluidity of the colonies, however, these boundaries proved permeable. Wealthy New Christian merchants played a prominent role in Brazil's economy in the seventeenth century. In both Lima and Mexico City large New Christian populations flourished for decades as well. However, once the Inquisition discovered them, these once-prosperous communities were subjected to harsh prosecutions that included confiscation of property and public executions by burning.

Some members of the surviving indigenous nobility of New Spain successfully claimed *limpieza de sangre* in the eighteenth century. In a petition submitted to the



The ornate exterior of the church of La Merced in Antigua, Guatemala. The richness and dominating presence of church architecture signaled the power and authority of the ecclesiastical establishment in colonial Latin America.

Spanish viceroy in 1699, Don Pedro Ramírez Vázquez confidently asserted that his noble Indian ancestors were untainted by "bad races," meaning any mixture with Jews, Muslims, heretics, or, implicitly, Africans. Since his ancestors had converted to Christianity at the time of the conquest, he claimed they were "Old Christians."¹ In the wake of this case, other descendants of indigenous noble families, but not native commoners or *mestizo* caciques, also claimed *limpieza de sangre*, thereby gaining access to coveted offices in the colonial establishment. While these claims strengthened the power of some native lords, it also made the judicial status and prestige of this class more dependent on the decisions of Spanish authorities than on traditional cultural practices.

Long-term, large-scale changes in the performance of the economy often altered the relations of wealth and power within and among the colonial elites. For example, the sixteenth-century decline in indigenous population undermined the prosperity and social power of *encomenderos* but simultaneously elevated that of Spanish officials and merchants. In the seventeenth century falling levels of silver production transferred economic power from miners to merchant creditors at Potosi. And in the case of the Brazilian gold boom after 1695, mining profits increased competition for labor with planters and forced up the cost of slaves needed for the colony's faltering sugar industry. In these and numerous other examples, economic forces, some local and others international in nature, had the power to transform colonial social structures.

Colonial elites developed strategies to meet these crises. With few exceptions, successful elite families diversified their holdings to limit damage caused by failure in any one sector of the economy. João Peixoto Viegas, the illegitimate son of a Portuguese cleric who immigrated to Brazil around 1640, provides an example. He built a traditional commercial career exporting Brazilian sugar and importing wine and slaves. As pressures developed in the sugar trade, he moved his capital to large rural estates based on livestock and market agriculture. The prosperous Zacatecan silver miner Joseph de Quesada provides another example. By the time of his death in 1686, he had transferred much of his wealth to an extensive rural estate with 30,000 head of sheep while retaining his declining mining property. Employing another approach, Lima merchant Juan de Quesada y Sotomayor attempted to secure his status in the 1630s by purchasing a lucrative bureaucratic appointment in Lima's royal treasury.

URBAN AND RURAL MIDDLE GROUPS

While interconnected elite families dominated colonial societies, the endurance of the Iberian empires also depended on the loyalty and energy of the far more numerous colonial middle groups that provided the muscles and sinews of the imperial economies. As merchants and peddlers, they connected the flows of goods across the Atlantic with local consumers. As priests, teachers, and intellectuals, they extended the reach of the Catholic faith as well as the Spanish and Portuguese

languages. And, in times of foreign threat or local rebellion, they provided fiscal resources as well as providing much of the manpower and leadership of the colonial police and military forces.

The impact of immigrant commoners from Iberia was greatest in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. They engaged in almost every economic activity. Some were shopkeepers or farmers while others filled ecclesiastical positions, practiced law or served as notaries, held minor offices, clerked in retail shops, owned or managed a tavern, plied a trade, or performed unskilled manual labor. The immigrants' pride in birth and racial identity along with the accompanying privileges separated them from the remainder of the population. Most retained strong loyalty to their home region in Iberia, and many used these ties to family and friends in Seville, Lisbon, or other cities and towns to facilitate business contacts, loans, or arranged marriages. Regardless of their birthplace, almost all immigrants considered themselves superior to their New World cousins.

The Urban Middle Groups

Manufacturers, master artisans, retail merchants, middle-ranking officials, military officers, lawyers, and priests were among the most prosperous and powerful members of the urban middle sectors. Despite this advantageous social position, most members of these groups depended on employment and patronage provided by the elite. It is not surprising that most imitated elite fashions and customs within the limitations imposed by their incomes. Poorer, more vulnerable, members of the middle sectors were too consumed by the daily struggle to provide for their families to invest scarce resources in imitating elite taste. While priests, bureaucrats, and military officers generally had modest incomes, their social status remained secure since it was based on institutional prestige and predictable employment.

Master craftsmen in skilled trades were organized collectively in guilds that set quality control standards, work rules, recruitment criteria for apprentices, and training procedures, as well as to defend against the competition of imports or local goods produced outside the guild system. They also sought to prevent competition among guild members by regulating the quality and style of products produced by guild members and the prices that could be charged. Nearly all artisan producers owned their tools and carried a small inventory, but only a few owned their shops and homes. This system of self-regulating craft monopolies was beginning to weaken in Europe before the settlement of America, and colonial society's racial hierarchies would present a new set of challenges. Unsurprisingly, guilds became most powerful in the largest cities of the Spanish colonies, Mexico City and Lima in particular; in smaller Spanish colonial cities and in Brazil, few formal guilds were created and, when present, were largely ceremonial in character.

The slow trickle of European immigrants willing to enter artisan crafts in the colonies led immigrant Spanish and Portuguese masters to train Indian, black, and *casta* apprentices. While the racially and culturally heterogeneous artisan communities that resulted in the New World escaped some of the economic restraints common in Europe, rigid colonial racial hierarchies undermined traditional

collegial values and weakened guilds institutionally. In this environment, many master artisans reduced their labor costs and increased profits by buying and training slaves or by ignoring the apprenticeship system altogether by hiring lesser-skilled temporary labor. As a result, successful participants in many trades were, in effect, manufacturers, not artisans. This was especially true in textile production where investors in textile workshops (*obrajes*) quickly became dependent on the forced labor of Indian and *casta* populations, rather than on the labor of traditional journeymen and apprentices. Nevertheless, in places with the strongest guilds, traditionally-trained masters continued to depend on the help of one or more journeymen and apprentices to satisfy the needs of their customers.

Retail merchants operated across a broad scale of enterprise. While the most successful sometimes rivaled *consulado* members in wealth, the majority of retailers operated small neighborhood shops or participated in the open-air markets that ringed the central plaza. The poorest members of this sector walked the streets carrying trays from which they sold food or everyday necessities like thread. Many retailers were little more than agents for wealthy wholesalers, their income deriving from their ability to buy goods on credit and then sell them in anticipation of changes in supply and demand. For nearly all retailers, profits were associated with consequential and unpredictable risks: Would a fleet arrive from Spain or Portugal? Would contraband goods undercut the contracted prices for goods already purchased on credit from a wholesale merchant? Given the general poverty of colonial society and given the inadequate supply of coinage, credit was the essential lubricant that sustained the retail market. Even at the level of the neighborhood grocery store, shopkeepers were commonly indebted to wholesale merchants while at the same time they carried large numbers of small debts owed to them by their customers.

Petty bureaucrats, secular priests, and members of religious communities had uniformly modest incomes but a relatively secure social status. Many middle-level colonial officials owed their positions to patronage. Once in office, these men sought to solidify and improve their status and income by deepening their ties to powerful patrons and local elite families. The selection of a well-placed marriage partner was often key to their ambitions. Many pursued marriages with the daughters of rich landowners or merchants, marriages that would bring dowries and potential inheritances. Others sought opportunities to enter commerce as investors. In a large number of cases, colonial officials supplemented their salaries with tips and bribes.

By the end of the sixteenth century the urban areas of Spanish America were home to numerous secular clerics, priests who were not members of orders such as the Franciscans or Dominicans. Those who acquired parishes received a small salary augmented by fees paid by parishioners for baptisms, marriages, and burials. Poor Indians and other impoverished commoners complained that these fees were so exorbitant that they could be forced into debt by the costs of a marriage or burial. Not only was the Catholic Church the largest landowner in most colonies, many individual priests and nuns were also involved in business as urban



Textile production was an important component of the economy of colonial Spanish America. Here wool yarn is prepared for weaving into cloth.

and rural property owners. The nun Catarina de Telles Barretto of the Desterro convent of Salvador, Bahia, illustrates this pattern. She owned rental property, lent money, and owned twelve slaves who prepared and sold sweets through the streets of the city. When she died she left a private estate worth half the annual income of her entire convent.

Rural Middle Groups

Some rural regions hosted significant numbers of small farmers, ranchers, and market gardeners. On the northern frontier of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, in the Bajío, and in the south in Oaxaca, for example, there were numerous smallholdings, ranches and farms that produced food and livestock for local markets. Some were little more than subsistence producers who in good years sold surplus crops to nearby consumers. Others were substantial properties that employed seasonal laborers and concentrated on cash crops for distant markets. The use of seasonal

workers kept labor costs low, but the scale of enterprise and limitations in local demand commonly restricted profits.

This social category was, perhaps, best exemplified by the *lavradores de cana* of the Brazilian sugar zone. Although dependent on nearby plantations for refining and processing sugar, some of these cane growers were prosperous individuals who owned slaves and land. In other cases, however, they were little more than sharecroppers exploited by wealthy planters who owned refining establishments. The high cost of land, slaves, and mechanical equipment for crushing and refining restricted their advancement. Although their dependence on sugar refiners limited their profits during boom times, the *lavradores* had lower fixed costs and less indebtedness than did planters and they therefore had less risk of financial catastrophe during periods of falling sugar prices. They, like all small independent farmers and ranchers in colonial Latin America, relied on the labor of wives and children, as only a few produced enough income to hire temporary workers. Rural women typically worked alongside husbands and fathers on farms and small ranches during harvest and planting seasons. This first-hand experience meant that many widows and single women were well-prepared to manage the small farms and ranches they inherited through the deaths of parents or spouses.

THE BROAD BASE OF COLONIAL SOCIETY

The majority of colonial Latin America's inhabitants lived lives narrowly circumscribed by poverty, material deprivation and violence. Many communities were constrained by the effects of discriminatory laws, racial prejudice, and forced labor systems, including slavery and the *mita*. The labor of the poor harvested crops, cared for livestock, mined and refined silver and gold, manufactured textiles, and moved goods from place to place. They were the journeymen, market women, stevedores, soldiers, day laborers, beggars, prostitutes, and vagrants who filled the streets and public spaces of colonial cities and towns. They were the miners, farm and plantation laborers, ranch hands, and mule and cart drivers who produced and delivered the products that sustained the colonies. They were the most likely to be accused of crimes and the most likely to be forced into military service. They were also the individuals and groups subjected to the harshest and most humiliating corporal punishments like brandings and whippings.

Little is known about the income levels and material conditions that framed the lives of the poor. Much more is known about the legal obligations that compelled their labor and the racial and ethnic discrimination that limited their opportunities. While all faced grave challenges to their very survival, there was a great diversity of opportunity and experience among the slave and free masses. While some hereditary Indian leaders owned land and livestock and enjoyed substantial income, the great mass of natives were oppressed by forced labor obligations and by taxes and the financial demands imposed by clerics. Similarly, while small numbers of slaves were able to gain their freedom through manumission,

the vast majority of slaves were forced to live their entire lives within this oppressive labor system. And, even as the population of free blacks expanded, the lives of individuals in this important group remained circumscribed by a broad array of discriminatory laws and racial prejudices. Nevertheless, a few free black and mixed-race men and women found ways to prosper, despite these obstacles. Low wages and unreliable employment opportunities kept the majority of the free poor in desperate poverty. Yet, despite the harshness of these realities, a minority of skilled journeymen earned high wages, and small numbers of peddlers and day laborers saved enough money to become property owners.

Opportunities and challenges differed from region to region and from economic sector to economic sector as well. In the eighteenth century, when the *mita* still disrupted the lives of tens of thousands of Indians across the southern Andes, for example, most native peoples in central Mexico had escaped forced labor obligations. Correspondingly, while all slaves faced harsh conditions, urban slaves generally experienced greater autonomy, better material circumstances, and greater access to manumission than did rural slaves. Despite this variety of experience, most poor men and women faced harsh physical conditions and narrowly circumscribed opportunities throughout their lives.

The Free Urban Poor

The greater social complexity and economic dynamism of colonial cities provided the poor with marginally better prospects for social mobility and economic advancement than did rural areas. Still, the great majority of the urban poor in colonial Brazil and Spanish America faced extreme privation. These conditions were structural in nature, since the wealth of these economies depended on maintaining low labor costs. That is, the rich were rich in large measure because the masses of society were held in poverty. Almost all journeymen, day laborers, peddlers, cart and mule drivers, small shopkeepers, market women, knife-sharpeners, barbers, and retail food-sellers struggled every day to secure food and shelter. Because it was nearly impossible to save, unemployment, injury, or illness could lead quickly to catastrophe for the poor.

Colonial cities were melting pots. In Brazil, for example, the racially mixed population filled the social interstices in both rural and urban society. Mixtures of the three original racial groups proliferated in the violent and unsettled early years of the colony, but it was the black-white mixtures, the *pardos*, that ultimately provided the majority of the skilled workforce in nearly every Brazilian city. Even in the largest cities with the greatest number of Portuguese immigrants, free blacks made up more than 50 percent of the skilled workforce. Transportation, construction, and nearly all occupations associated with Atlantic shipping depended on the black and mixed-race populations, as did the military and the constabulary that maintained public order.

Brazil's free black and *pardo* population also played a crucial role in the arts, especially music, painting, and sculpture. The best-known colonial Brazilian artist was Antônio Lisboa, the son of a Portuguese immigrant and a slave woman.

Afflicted with leprosy in middle age, he was known as Aleijadinho, the "little cripple." He designed both the interiors and the exteriors of many of Minas Gerais's finest churches and was also an accomplished sculptor, best known for his depiction of the Twelve Prophets at Nosso Senhor de Mattosinhos.

With the passage of time, racial and cultural boundaries blurred due to racial mixing and assimilation. While a strong correlation between racial stratification and class structure existed throughout the colonial period, this correlation was weakest in urban areas during periods of economic expansion and was strongest in rural areas remote from market forces. Some free blacks and *mestizos* became master artisans or retail merchants, and some acquired substantial property. Some European immigrants, on the other hand, were forced to survive as beggars. Color prejudice and discrimination endured in colonial Latin America, but small numbers of mixed-race men and women escaped some of the most-oppressive consequences.

Urban wage laborers, like free agricultural laborers, generally worked from sunrise to sunset. Their workweek ran from Monday through Saturday, but numerous religious and secular holidays interrupted this routine, and they customarily received breaks for lunch and refreshment during the work day. Chronic low wages and periodic unemployment meant that few urban laborers could afford to purchase or rent housing suitable for a family. This obstacle caused many to defer marriage or even abandon their families. Forced to spend most of their income on food, most poor men and women found shelter as best they could, sharing rooms or living in doorways, alleys, and public spaces.

Few urban workers worked fifty-two, six-day weeks a year: most endured periods of unemployment and privation each year. Because few wage laborers could accumulate savings, extended unemployment or illness often led to destitution or forced migration. For married craftsmen and laborers, the income of wives and children often proved crucial to survival. Although women were barred by statute and custom from most skilled and unskilled trades, a clear majority of poor adult women worked. Most avoided the constraints of guild regulations or colonial laws by producing and selling goods made in the home or by selling food and drink in urban markets. The fact that unmarried women headed a majority of poor households in most colonial cities deepened women's engagement in colonial economies.

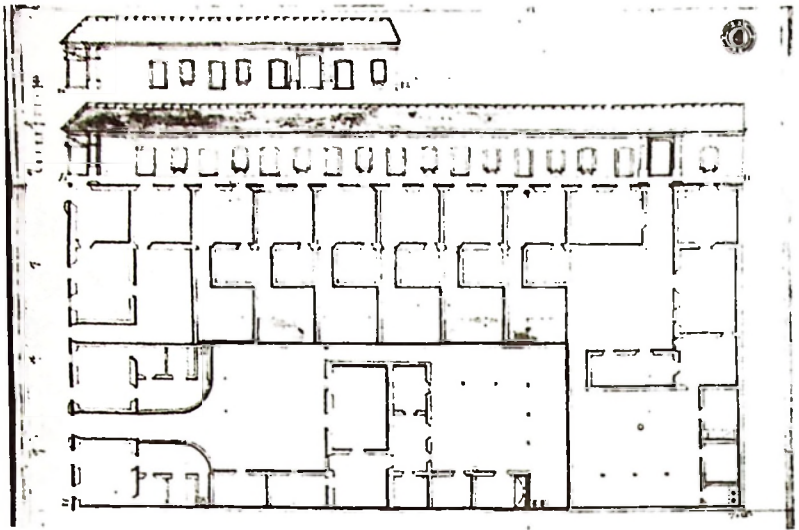
Peddlers and market vendors, whether male or female, shared the low incomes and vulnerabilities of wage laborers. Often in debt, their meager inventories were subject to theft and spoilage. And, unlike artisans and other skilled workers, petty retailers could not rely on wage custom and institutionally established labor recruitment mechanisms to find employment. They thus lived on guile and pluck, and few ever achieved material security. For many the eventual fall from peddler to thief or beggar was all too predictable.

The scant forms of aid available to those in need were mostly located in cities. Some artisan guilds offered medical assistance to their members, and some religious orders maintained free hospitals or provided food for the poor, but these



The central market of colonial Buenos Aires (top) and a woman from the country delivering water to the city.

institutions helped only a small minority of those in need. Injuries and illnesses that led to unemployment quickly led to desperate circumstances for individuals or for families. Without income, families typically confronted starvation in a matter of days or weeks. Nearly every colonial city maintained at least one orphanage



Architect's design for an apartment block.

where desperate mothers and fathers left children they could no longer provide for; admissions predictably surged in times of scarcity and high prices.

The bottom rungs of the urban social hierarchy were inhabited by large numbers of beggars, thieves, prostitutes, and the impoverished victims of diseases like leprosy. All the poor, the honest and the criminal alike, shared these difficult conditions, with many sleeping in the streets and struggling daily to find the money to buy food. The poorest were forced to scavenge the offal discarded by municipal slaughterhouses and the stale bread thrown out by bakeries or to rely on the unpredictable generosity of wealthy households willing to provide charity.

Urban Slaves

From the early sixteenth century until the end of the colonial era, Spanish America and Brazil collectively imported an estimated 4.8 million African slaves. The mounting volume of the Atlantic slave trade after its slow beginnings in the sixteenth century was largely driven by the profits produced by plantation agriculture, and no product was more dependent on slavery than sugar. While the labor needs of tropical agriculture drove the slave trade, nearly all cities of colonial Latin America had large slave populations as well. Wealthy households, artisan shops, *obrajes*, transportation networks, and urban markets all relied on a mix of slave and free labor. While the institution of slavery imposed tight controls and difficult conditions on the lives of all slaves, those in cities generally experienced superior material conditions as well as greater opportunities to gain freedom than did their rural counterparts.

Current and former slaves residing within access of royal and ecclesiastical courts turned to them for support against their owners as they sought improvements—"fractional freedoms"—in lives marked by neither absolute bondage nor autonomy regardless of their legal status. They benefited from relationships with powerful owners and networks that involved access to notaries, procurators, and others familiar with legal practices and the associated formulaic documentation. They sought support, most frequently related to family unification and access to conjugal rights, that could include ecclesiastical censures read at high mass by or posted on church doors. These threatened miscreant owners with excommunication while publicly shaming them.

Some owners manumitted slaves as an act of religious piety or because of a slave's exemplary service, but only a minority of masters provided freedom without demanding payment or imposing conditions on the liberty of a freed slave. Elderly slaves and children were the most likely beneficiaries of this generosity. The most common form of manumission was self-purchase. In these cases, the slave and master agreed upon the slave's value and, once the slave had saved this amount, manumission was granted. Because urban economies afforded slaves opportunities to earn and accumulate money, this form of manumission developed nearly everywhere, propelling the growth of the free black community. When masters refused to set a reasonable price on self-purchase, Portuguese and Spanish law provided a framework for determining a slave's market value and supervising his or her self-purchase.

It was common for slaves, once freed, to commit themselves to purchase the freedom of family members who remained in bondage. Indeed, the collective efforts of black families were key to the rapid growth in the free black population. By the end of the eighteenth century, free blacks accounted for 40 percent of the population of Salvador, Bahia, and 20 percent of the population of Rio de Janeiro. During this same period in Spanish Buenos Aires about 1 percent of the slave population gained freedom each year through manumission, the majority women. Although manumission was far more common in Latin America than in the British colonies, the greater part of the region's African slaves and their American-born descendants lived and died in bondage.

Among those granted manumission, many found that their freedom was hedged by ambiguities and uncertainties. Some masters imposed harsh conditions on the slaves they manumitted, such as requiring continued service until their own deaths. Some of the manumitted were required to make periodic cash payments to their master or to the master's heirs during a set term. One former slave in Buenos Aires was required to accept the humiliation of returning to her former mistress's home each week to iron the bed linen. The freedom of former slaves, even when documented, could be challenged in the courts. The essential cruelty of this institution is, perhaps, best demonstrated by legal cases in which former slaves granted freedom after nursing an owner through a long and difficult illness were hauled into the courts by greedy heirs who sought compensation for the loss of the slave's market value.

For those entrapped in this shadowy territory between freedom and captivity, legal resolution could only be achieved with the support of powerful allies.

Royal and ecclesiastical courts had the power to intervene on behalf of slaves who claimed to be illegally held in bondage, but these institutions were mostly available only to those resident cities. When taken up by the courts, the competing claims of owners and slaves were adjudicated through the examination of witnesses and documents. The handful of slaves who succeeded in these unequal legal contests usually had the support of notaries, lawyers, or powerful, well-connected individuals familiar with legal practices. One of the most useful tools used in these litigations were ecclesiastical censures, a priest's demand that anyone who had evidence about the disputed legal status of a slave provide testimony under threat of excommunication and eternal condemnation. Once read at mass or posted on church doors, these demands for testimony could prove surprisingly effective in establishing the freedom of a former slave.

By the late colonial period men and women of modest means owned the majority of slaves in cities like Buenos Aires, Caracas, Havana, and Rio de Janeiro. As slave imports increased after 1760, slave prices fell, and the character of urban slavery in the colonies changed. Artisans and the owners of *obrajes* and small factories sought to reduce labor costs by adding slaves to their workforces. Many widows and single women of modest means who sought to maintain a "respectable" household also purchased at least one female slave to cook, clean, and run market errands. More commonly, this growing class of humble slave owners sent their male slaves into the streets to earn wages, demanding only that their slaves pay them a set percentage of their earnings. A minority of these slaves lived outside their owners' households and pursued employment on their own. Many female slaves, on the other hand, participated in market activities on behalf of their owners, turning their earnings over at the end of the day.

The most important organizations of the urban black community were based on European models, although slaves infused these institutions with African culture. Within the Catholic Church slaves found ways to create collective organizations and establish rituals and practices that helped to humanize their captivity. Lay brotherhoods, *cofradías*, provided an opportunity to participate actively in the communities' civic and religious life. Some brotherhoods collected funds to help purchase their members' freedom, provide minimal health care, or pay for decent burials. *Cofradías* also played a crucial role in the religious life of the black community, organizing black participation in the secular and religious celebrations that gave expression to urban civic consciousness. In areas with large African-born populations, there were also social organizations based on African identities—Congos, Benguelas, or Yorubas, for example. Besides uniting individuals from distinct cultural and language groups, these associations helped keep alive elements of African tradition and also provided an organized means for adapting to the harsh realities of the colonial slave system.

The Free Rural Poor

The experience of poverty had a distinctive character in the countryside. Forced labor in various forms was widespread and endured to the end of the colonial

period. Laws compelled indigenous peoples still living in traditional communities to subsidize the farms, ranches, mines, and *obrajes* of the elite and white middle sectors with their labor, compensated by wages that seldom met even basic subsistence needs. Similarly, the forced labor of African slaves subsidized the development of profitable plantation economies in Brazil and Spanish Caribbean, fueling the development of Atlantic commerce and creating the great wealth of the planter class.

The rhythms of the agricultural economy meant that the heavy labor demands of planting and harvesting were followed by months of less intense work that included weeding, fencing, and other maintenance tasks. A slave workforce large enough to fully meet the demands of, say, the sugar harvest would be very expensive and underutilized during much of the year. Many planters and large-scale farmers found it profitable, therefore, to supplement the labor of their slaves or *mita* laborers with free wage labor during planting and harvesting.

As a result, the colonial Latin American countryside was home to thousands of poor free families who produced subsistence crops on their own land or as tenants and then worked for wages for short periods on neighboring estates that also held slaves. That is, large-scale plantations and *haciendas* producing for export or for distant domestic markets existed symbiotically with populations of impoverished free farmers and tenants devoted to subsistence production. The small holdings of the poor were typically located on the least desirable land and were often surrounded by large estates. In this ongoing relationship, harvest wages earned by the free poor carried them through difficult periods while the large estates avoided the high fixed costs of purchasing additional slaves to meet short-term harvest requirements. This interdependence, however, was not a form of partnership, since the rural poor were always subordinated and dependent on their richer neighbors.

Even in those regions where slavery or the forced labor of Indians was uncommon, few free agricultural laborers, whether Indians, free blacks, or *castas*, were able to escape economic exploitation at the hands of powerful land owners. In Brazil, for example, small-scale *lavradores de cana* were dependent on planters to purchase their production of sugar cane or refine it. Seldom were they able to refuse the prices offered for their cane or to transport it to a more-distant refiner. In the Río de la Plata or in New Spain nearly all small- or medium-scale wheat producers, operating without access to credit, were forced to sell their crops at low prices long before harvest. Large producers with greater capital resources, on the other hand, could hold their harvested crops off the market until prices peaked. Similarly, in northern New Spain small-scale cattlemen grazed their herds on *tierras baldías*, lands without clear title. When faced with the competition of local *hacendados* with strong connections to the judicial authorities for these grazing rights, they had few alternatives other than surrender.

Among the most vulnerable members of rural society were unmarried poor men. Without the supplemental earnings and labor of wives and children, they were dependent on the pitiful wages paid by short-term employers. These men wandered the countryside, alone or in groups, on a schedule dictated by seasonal labor needs of possible employers, harvesting crops for local consumption, like wheat and corn, or, export crops, like cacao or tobacco. In livestock-raising regions like the Río de

la Plata, they culled the herds and castrated young bulls. They also butchered and skinned cattle, cured hides, and salted the meat. Nearly all these tasks were poorly compensated, arduous, and dangerous. Without savings any injury or extended period of unemployment was potentially catastrophic. In this environment many slipped back and forth between legitimate employment and banditry.

Plantation Slaves

The development of the African slave trade had important consequences for the colonial social structure. Small numbers of Afro-Iberians, both slave and free, participated in the conquest of native peoples and the establishment of European settlements in Latin America. In this period of social fluidity, many slaves brought to the New World gained their freedom, and a few became influential members of colonial society. By the early seventeenth century, a direct slave trade with Africa dramatically increased the number of slaves. While the majority of slaves in the first decades of the colonial era lived in cities, most Africans imported after 1620 were used in plantation agriculture. The cultural distinctiveness of an increasingly African slave population and the social effects of the harsh labor and brutal discipline imposed on slaves promoted negative racial stereotypes and reinforced the effects of discriminatory legislation and racial prejudice.

Between 1581 and 1700 the slave population of Brazil increased by nearly 800,000, while in Spanish America the number was around 660,000. The volume of this trade continued to expand between 1701 and 1820, with Brazil adding almost 2.7 million African slaves and Spanish America adding approximately 655,000 more. The loss of indigenous populations due to epidemics and the suitability of climate and soil to the production of sugar were key to both the size of the African slave trade and the distribution of slaves among the colonies: regions where indigenous populations had fallen most dramatically and where sugar could be profitably grown, especially coastal Brazil and the Caribbean, were the most important destinations of this terrible trade. When Cuban agriculture moved from tobacco to sugar production after 1770, for example, slave importations surged to 56,000 between 1776 and 1800 and then more than quadrupled from 1801 to 1825.

Despite the significance of sugar to the history of the African slave trade, slaves were broadly distributed across the colonial Latin American countryside. As the trade to Latin America expanded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, slaves became available in greater numbers and at lower prices. This permitted the widespread use of slaves in agriculture and mining. Slaves were found on the small-scale wheat farms of Mexico, Chile, and Argentina. Slave labor was crucial to the development of viticulture in Peru and to indigo production in Central America as well. Even on the ranches of southern Brazil, the Río de la Plata, and Mexico, slave *vaqueros* provided much of the labor.

Tropical agriculture was especially dependent on the labor of slaves. In addition to the sugar planters and refiners, the producers of tobacco, cacao, indigo, and, toward the end of the colonial era, cotton and coffee all used large numbers of slaves. In these agricultural sectors slaves provided not only the raw labor that cut

down forests, cleared land, and planted and harvested crops but also the skills that were key to refining, processing, and transporting rural production to market. So, while the combination of free farmers and laborers and indigenous communities produced much of the food and livestock consumed in the colonies, it was slavery that fueled the region's profitable export agriculture.

Slave labor was also crucial to the functioning of the gold mines of Brazil and the Chocó region of New Granada. Both rich mining regions depended on gangs of slaves to provide the back-breaking labor necessary to discover and exploit placer deposits. The later development of diamond and emerald mines in Brazil also relied on slave labor. While slaves were present in the silver mines of the Andes and Mexico, native laborers compelled by the *mita/repartimiento* and free workers provided most of the workforce below ground. In silver mining black slaves were most commonly used in skilled positions or as supervisors of indigenous pick and shovel workers.



Indigenous peoples found ways to survive by forging relationships with the dominant market-based economies of the Europeans. Here two Pampas Indians sell animal pelts and feathers in front of a European shop in Buenos Aires.

From the beginning, Spanish and Portuguese colonial authorities relied on punitive laws and on violence to control the growing black population. The harshest conditions were common in plantation zones, where slaves far outnumbered the white and free mixed-race populations. Mutilations, whippings, and executions carried out by overseers and masters were the all-too-predictable responses to transgressions by slaves and black free men. The harshest punishments were reserved for leaders of slave rebellions. While colonial judicial authorities were able to establish some limits to the power of masters over slaves in cities, few restraints existed in the countryside.

Plantation owners, overseers, and slave drivers were seldom shy in using corporal punishments. Whippings were very common in agricultural zones, especially on the largest plantations where masters and overseers directed scores, sometimes hundreds, of slaves. Plantation slaves who resisted their masters violently or who participated in slave rebellions were routinely executed. Chronic runaways were often punished by cutting off ears, feet, or hands. A law written to punish runaways in Cartagena made explicit the brutal nature of the slave regime. One hundred lashes were given to a slave who returned to his master after a week as a runaway. For a slave who was captured after a month, "he should have his genital organ cut off . . . [and he should be] placed in the pillary [*sic*] of this city, so that the blacks might learn from this example; which sentence should be done publicly, where everyone may see."²

Traditional Indigenous Communities

The demographic effects of the sixteenth-century epidemics shaped the character of colonial Latin American society. Most indigenous communities lost at least 40 percent of their populations, and in some regions the effects were much worse: by 1600 the indigenous populations of the Caribbean and tropical coastal regions of the American mainland were nearly eliminated. This demographic disaster had a lasting impact on the colonial countryside of Brazil and Spanish America, for it forced colonial authorities and settlers to adjust from an early colonial economy developed in an environment of abundant labor controlled and organized in institutions that included *encomienda* and slavery.

Colonial authorities reacted to the decline in native numbers by making the lives of Indians more difficult while at the same time threatening the continued existence of their communities. They forced surviving indigenous populations to abandon their traditional villages and combine with other relocated groups in new villages close to privileged agricultural and mining interests. While many natives found ways to escape these relocations, the effects often undermined long-established ties between peoples and their lands. Relocation also weakened the cohesion of kinship groups, like the *allyu* in the Andes, and undermined the authority of traditional native elites. Predictably, colonial authorities typically responded by increasing the labor requirements imposed on surviving populations, rather than by mitigating their demands.

A significant minority of the native population sought to escape relocation and labor obligations by abandoning their traditional communities (see Chapter 4).



Indian porter carrying a Spaniard on his back.

Many of these *forasteros* moved into wage labor on Spanish estates. In Brazil thousands of Indians fled to frontier regions, and many others relocated to colonial cities, where they lived culturally transformed lives. As city dwellers, they not only depended on cash wages and, in many cases, exercised occupations unknown before the conquest, but they also lived outside traditional family and community networks. While they retained many of the most important attributes of indigenous culture, like language, they were now on their own in ways unimaginable before the arrival of Europeans.

The process of compressing the great diversity of indigenous cultures and social organizations began with the creation of a new identity, that of “Indian.” Although originally employed as a racial description, “Indian” also became a cultural term and, for the Spanish Crown, a fiscal category that defined obligations for the native population. The development and implementation of Indian policy by agents of the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns gave this artifact of colonial rule political and economic meaning.

Accommodation and adaptation, as well as rebellion, thus characterized native responses to Spanish rule in areas where large indigenous populations had

depended on agriculture. Agricultural products now had monetary values. The requirement that Indians pay their obligatory tribute in cash forced them to sell products in the markets of Spanish towns and cities or earn wages. While most experienced these demands and burdens as oppression, some discovered opportunities. Some Indians became muleteers and cart drivers; others directed the production of their fields toward markets; a small number became rural shopkeepers. While the mass of indigenous society suffered both reduced material circumstance and a loss of autonomy with the advent of the colonial regime, a minority became cultural and political intermediaries between European and native worlds. Despite these examples of successful accommodation and adaptation, it is important to recognize that migration away from Spanish and Portuguese settlements continued throughout the colonial era. For native peoples the European conquest had been a disaster. One measure of this reality was the ongoing cycle of rebellions and uprisings that provided strong challenges to Spanish and Portuguese authority from the sixteenth to the late eighteenth centuries.

An important measure of the native population's ability both to retain pre-conquest cultural characteristics and to adapt to the cultural and economic impositions of the colonial regime can be found in language. The well-studied Nahuatl-speaking population of central Mexico most clearly reveals continuities with the indigenous past as well as alterations after conquest. Documents written in Nahuatl showed almost no change in the language until the 1540s. During the following hundred years, this native language incorporated large numbers of Spanish nouns. After 1650, Spanish linguistic influence continued to increase as bilingualism became more common.

In some places, indigenous languages survived despite conquest and the onslaught of disease. In Yucatan the Maya language survived to the end of the colonial period as the region's primary language. As one official put it, "The language generally spoken in this province by Indians, *mestizos* and *pardos* is the Maya language."³ The Guaraní language of Paraguay also became the common regional language. And, in the Andean region, Quechua and Aymara, dominant languages in the time of the Inka, have survived to the present as vital elements of national cultures. In São Paulo, Brazil, by way of contrast, mixed-race frontiersmen who pushed the borders of Portuguese settlement west, exploring the interior, raiding Indian communities in Paraguay for slaves, and discovering gold at the end of the seventeenth century, spoke a related indigenous language, Tupí.

Indian communities survived the colonial experience, despite these devastating changes, but they were substantially altered. While the effects of massive population loss and forced integration into the market economy put native peoples under extreme pressure, indigenous languages and traditional communal landholding practices proved remarkably resilient. Many native groups, especially those distant from colonial urban centers, retained some oversight over local affairs. Yet the vitality and relative abundance of these precontact agricultural societies were lost due to the heavy external demands for labor and land. In its place developed the impoverished peasant village still visible in Latin America.

NOTES

1. Peter B. Villella, "Pure and Noble Indians, Untainted by Inferior Idolatrous Races: Native Elites and the Discourse of Blood Purity in Late Colonial Mexico," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 91:4 (2011), 633.
2. Quoted by Peter Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Colombia* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 79.
3. Quoted in Wolfgang Gabbert, "Social Categories, Ethnicity and the State in Yucatán, Mexico," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 33 (2001), p. 468.

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CHAPTER 7



The Family and Society

CHRONOLOGY

1514	Indians allowed to marry freely with Indians and Spaniards
1530	Indians with more than one spouse are to live with first spouse or be punished
1539	Prohibition of unmarried women traveling to the Indies without a license from the king
1540	First female convent in Mexico City
1561	First female convent in Lima
1563	Officials to encourage blacks to marry blacks
1568	First female convent in Puebla, New Spain
1572	Legitimate offspring of free or slave blacks and Indian women declared tributaries
1572	<i>Caciques</i> and their eldest sons declared exempt from tribute and <i>mita</i> service
1578	Men in Spain with wives in the Indies are to return there and live with them
1605	Final authorization of a foundling home in Lima
1618	Men married in Indies must obtain a license to go to Spain and post bond that they will return to their wives
1677	First female convent in Brazil
1718	King provides financial assistance to foundling home in Havana
1774	Mexico City poorhouse opens
1776	Royal Pragmatic to prevent marriage between unequal parties under the age of majority without parental consent
1794	Abandoned children declared "children of the king" and therefore legitimate and white

FAMILY: THE FOUNDATION OF COLONIAL SOCIETY

The family was the basic social unit in colonial Latin America. While race, wealth, occupation, and gender all helped to identify an individual's position in the social structure, these attributes were usually evaluated in the context of a broadly defined family. "Family" meant not only the biological family but also the larger set of family relations created by marriage and by forging alliances through the selection of godparents, the arrangement called *compadrazgo* in Spanish and *compadrio* in

Portuguese. Appreciating the totality of a family's economic and political activities thus provides a better understanding of the colonial world over time than chronicling an individual's successes or failures.

Family objectives influenced and colored the opportunities and goals of its individual members, especially among the elite. The family's power to mold individual choices grew out of its ability to grant or withhold scarce assets such as credit, land, and political influence. Education, marriage, occupation, and even travel were familial concerns that framed and limited individual choice. To ignore these claims commonly meant losing access to family support in the realization of individual ambitions.

The advantages, or burdens, of familial associations had a longitudinal character, for status was achieved and asserted across successive generations. A family's lineage, services to the Crown, and privileges or, alternatively, its poverty, scandals, and criminal associations combined to place its individual members within the social order. As a result, ambitious men and women worked to elevate the reputations of their families as platforms for their own ambitions as well as the aspirations of their kin and heirs. This was most common among the elite, but ambitious government officials and other propertied groups, like urban professionals, also took care to protect and enhance family reputation. While artisans, petty merchants, farmers, and other humble members of society were compelled to make economic survival their primary objective, it was not uncommon for them to assert legitimate birth or racial purity in legal documents.

Although early censuses suggest that nuclear families and single-parent households were the most common residential units, the extended family was the effective social and economic unit for both Iberians and native peoples throughout much of the colonial world. Members of the indigenous nobility prided themselves on their lineages just as much as did members of the settler elites and were equally capable of exploiting the benefits of familial connections and resources. Long after the conquest, *caciques*, *kurakas*, *batabs*, and other hereditary elites normally married within their own rank, thus maintaining their social distance from native commoners. Yet these commoners also perceived the family as a basic social unit and, as a result, sought to control marriage decisions that were often crucial to the maintenance of land rights or to assistance during droughts and other difficult economic times. The continuing importance of indigenous kinship groups in Peru and central Mexico testifies to the strength of family ties. One example is found in colonial Yucatan, where patrilineal extended families of up to five related males, their wives, and unmarried daughters formed the basic rural economic unit. But, nearly everywhere the strength of familial associations allowed native communities to survive despite the heavy demands for tribute and labor by colonial authorities.

Because the mixed-race population, *castas*, drew upon indigenous, European, and African cultural experiences, it is difficult to generalize about marriage patterns, family formation, or the workings of kinship networks. In the early decades that followed the military phase of European occupation, some Spanish and Portuguese settlers married Indian women. Many more lived in less formal arrangements often referred to as concubinage. In both Peru and New Spain, for example, nearly

all the early *encomendero* households included women from the indigenous nobilities. An important number of the racially mixed children from these relationships were raised within the households of their European fathers or, in the case of girls, sent away from their native mothers to be raised and educated by Spanish nuns. These mixed-race children commonly shared their father's cultural perspectives and desired to advance familial ambitions as defined by Iberian culture. At the same time, the indigenous consorts of male settlers and their mixed-race children often played important roles as cultural intermediaries, transmitting language skills, customs, technologies, and folkways back and forth between the two communities.

As the number of European women in the colonies grew and as elite males increasingly saw advantages in asserting the purity of their bloodlines, the pattern of raising *mestizo* children in the homes of their European fathers weakened. When not recognized by their fathers and separated from the communities of their mothers, and thus from traditional rights associated with their mothers' lineages, these orphaned or abandoned children often sought to survive in increasingly heterodox cities and towns. These population centers gradually became the locus for an emerging *casta* culture that mixed elements from indigenous, European, and African origins. By the seventeenth century Church officials and colonial authorities widely assumed that nearly all *castas* were illegitimate. Despite the discriminatory consequences of these assumptions, a family's or individual's reputation for honesty, hard work, or courage could be turned to advantage by a successful *casta*. As a general rule, material success among *castas* tended to coincide with the close embrace of Iberian cultural norms promoted by the elite.

Marriage

In the eyes of the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns and the Catholic Church, the sacrament of marriage alone was the basis for a legitimate family. Although many Iberians engaged in sexual relationships with women of diverse backgrounds, their marriages rarely crossed ethnic boundaries, even in the early decades of settlement when few European women were available. Except during the years immediately following the conquest, when some settlers married women from indigenous noble families, the richest and most powerful men in the colonies sought marriages with women of their own culture and class. Children of these legitimate families then became the chief beneficiaries of their fathers' social position and fortune. While formal dissolution or divorce terminated a few marriages, union for life, if not love, was the general rule that underlay Spanish and Portuguese matrimonial practices and the accompanying elaboration of the extended family.

Frequently Iberian males established less formal relations with native, black, and *casta* women. These relationships might include the couple visiting openly or even living in the same household. Such unions had a publicly known sexual character and children frequently resulted. In some of these cases they lasted years, and the woman, although denied the status of wife, had broad supervisory responsibility for the shared household. It was in these more enduring relationships that mixed-race children born outside wedlock might be legally recognized by their Spanish or Portuguese fathers and therefore gain the right to inherit

property or status. Elite marriages were in large measure economic and political alliances forged to further family ambitions. By the end of the sixteenth century these were nearly always arranged, endogamous alliances in which parents and guardians had carefully assessed the economic and social benefits potential marriage partners brought the family. Cash and property were often more alluring than physical charms in selecting marriage partners, as marriage linked not just the bride and groom but also their families. Marriage offered the opportunity for two prominent families to join and expand their economic and political activities. Frequently, a wealthy male immigrant or sometimes a rising but not yet socially prominent individual sought to unite with an established family richer in status than in worldly possessions.

Dowries were powerful tools used to achieve a family's ambition for elite status, although their use had declined by the mid-eighteenth century. Nevertheless, a substantial dowry always enhanced the likelihood that a woman would contract an advantageous marriage. The more prosperous a bride's family, the more apt it was to dower her and thereby provide her with some financial security while underwriting some of the new couple's expenses. The size of the dowry varied with the family's wealth and number of daughters. In prosperous cities like Mexico City, Lima, and Salvador, for example, brides from rich families often received dowries of cash, jewels, slaves, clothing, art objects, and furniture worth over 10,000 pesos. Some dowries also included a house, *hacienda*, or mine, but normally these properties went to the bride's male siblings as inheritances.

The husband administered the bride's dowry but was legally responsible for maintaining its value, for it remained the wife's property and a potential inheritance for her children or, if she died childless, her heirs among her birth family. In a small number of cases, women were forced to protect their financial interests in court. In 1693, for example, Phelipa Tello de Guzmán sued to remove her property from the control of her spendthrift husband.¹

Similarly, a potential groom could enhance his eligibility by providing an *arras*, a gift, to the bride. This was often a sum equal to 10 percent of his total wealth at the time of marriage. The *arras* then became part of the bride's personal estate, improving her financial future. Just as the dowry boldly stated the wealth and power of the wife's family, the *arras* reflected the husband's financial resources. The wording of this marital gift often testified to the bride's honor, virginity, and social position. The scale of these marital arrangements can be seen clearly in the marriage of María Antonia de la Redonda y Bolívar and Francisco Delgadillo de Sotomayor in Lima in 1668. She brought to the marriage a dowry valued at 61,500 pesos, while her husband, a future city councilman, provided her with an *arras* of 20,000 pesos.

Outside of major cities, few families provided dowries of more than several thousand pesos. However, even among artisans and petty merchants a small dowry that included a few hundred pesos or a slave could be leveraged expand a commercial undertaking or escape from debt, thus transforming a young couple's prospects. The importance of a dowry was such that, in both Brazil and Spanish America, charitable organizations sometimes provided modest dowries for some orphaned young women in order to arrange a favorable marriage.

Similar considerations affected the marriage choices of other social groups as well, although formal dowries were seldom negotiated. It was not uncommon for a journeyman artisan to marry the widow of his employer, for example, even if she were substantially older. In these cases, the young artisan gained an expedited access to the status of master craftsman as well as access to the deceased husband's tools, inventory, and customers. In areas with large indigenous populations and traditional economic and cultural practices, native parents or village elders sometimes intervened in the selection of spouses to gain small economic benefits for a young adult. Similarly, male slaves could guarantee the future freedom of their descendants by fathering them with an indigenous or free black woman, since the legal status of a child followed the status of the mother. In general, it was common for *castas* to marry within their own group—a *mestizo* with a *mestiza*, for example. Marriages with members of other racially mixed groups or with blacks or natives were not unusual, however. In urban settings, residency (neighbors marrying neighbors) or occupation (shoemakers marrying the daughters of shoemakers) was often more important than ethnicity in marriage choices.

In Spanish America, the marriage rates of Spaniards and Indians were generally higher than those of *castas*. The *casta* pattern differed, in large part, because of this group's more perilous economic circumstances, denied access to traditional Indian landholding rights as well as to full participation in white-dominated economic sectors. Also, because *castas* were among the poorest members of society, few were able to bear the church fees and other costs associated with marriage. These patterns also influenced the generally high levels of female-headed households in the colonies. In Buenos Aires at the end of the colonial period, for example, women headed 38 percent of all households while in contemporary Ouro Preto, Brazil, this percentage was a startling high 45 percent of households.

Even though the Catholic Church and Spanish and Portuguese law granted slaves the right to marry, marriages were less frequent among black slaves than among the free population. The sexual imbalance in the slave trade, impediments inherent in the legal status of slaves, and the active opposition of some masters worked to inhibit slave marriages. Slave marriages were more common in urban areas where a slave's desire to marry might be protected by priests or judges than on plantations or farms. Urban slaves were also more likely to have private incomes, as artisans or market women, for example, that would enable them to absorb the costs of marriage. Nevertheless, the obstacles to slave marriages were very real. In Peru before 1650, less than 8 percent of slaves aged twenty to twenty-five and less than 15 percent of slaves aged twenty-six to thirty-five were married. Women in both age groups married more frequently than men. While many slave families were forged without the sanction of the Church, formal marriages were remarkably common in large urban centers. Given the obstacles faced by this oppressed population, the creation and maintenance of both long-term formal and informal family structures was remarkable. One exceptional example demonstrates this phenomenon. On the sugar producing Engenho de Santana in Ilhéus, Brazil in 1731, over 60 percent of all adult slaves were married or lived in consensual unions.

In the sixteenth century the Catholic Church regarded twelve-year-old girls and fourteen-year-old boys as eligible for marriage. Elite parents often encouraged daughters to marry at a young age, as youthful marriage helped ensure premarital virginity and thus the maintenance of family honor as well as a high reproductive capability. In Spanish America, European and creole men were four years older than their wives on average. Among the elite, the age difference was often



Two examples from the Spanish colonies of portraits representing ethnic mixing.

even greater. For example, when Pedro Jiménez de los Cobos, a native-born alderman of Mexico City, married Clara Leonor del Sen in 1684, he was twenty-seven and she was just fourteen. Peninsular Juan Martínez de Lejarzar married a creole woman in Querétaro, Mexico, when he was forty-nine and she was just twenty-three. Similarly, in Brazil many single Portuguese high court judges married much younger Brazilian women, forging links with local elites.

The lives of women of the white elite and middle groups were more closely controlled by families than were the lives of poorer women. In Brazil, for example, women of both rural and urban elite families seldom ventured from home without a chaperon except for Mass or for a closely supervised religious festival or public occasion. Their reputations were protected by restrict contacts with men outside the family; custom sometimes kept these elite women from even participating in dinner conversation.

Male concern for their daughters' chastity and their wives' honor at times led to violence. Indeed, courts in colonial Spanish America and Brazil could send a woman suspected of infidelity to a convent or house of seclusion merely on the testimony of her husband or father. The sometimes-draconian efforts to control and isolate wives and daughters from sexual temptation were not foolproof. Amorous men could elaborate complex assaults on the virtue of even married women. In one notorious case, the son of a judge in Potosí seduced the wife of a wealthy rival, convincing her to help arrange her husband's murder. When discovered, the powerful families of the two lovers sent the woman to a convent and paid off the victim's family.²

Evidence shows that women of all classes and ethnicities used houses of seclusion, or *casas de recogimiento*, to escape abusive or unhappy marriages. Given that husbands had few checks on their authority over wives and, in the worst cases, given that some presumed to coerce their wives physically, houses of seclusion provided some protection for battered or bullied wives. In most cases this was only a short-term solution, but by involving religious and legal authorities in her case, the wife did gain some leverage in negotiating for changes in her husband's behavior or, alternatively, time to pursue annulment or divorce.

A significant minority of free adults of all races and social classes remained single. Limited evidence suggests that this was even true among the Spanish population, in which it appears that a quarter or more of the men and women over the age of twenty-five never married. This high rate probably reflected the effects of racial prejudice that made Europeans and their American-born descendants reluctant to marry outside their ethnic group or below their class status and thus left them with only a small pool of acceptable spouses. Some Spanish and Portuguese males withdrew from this process by becoming priests or lay brothers of a Catholic order. Women also entered religious communities as nuns voluntarily or sometimes under pressure from their families, who were desperate to avoid providing dowries beyond what a convent required. Other groups—*castas*, Indians, and blacks—were routinely denied these alternatives to marriage due to racial barriers within the Church.

Convents for nuns were established in the sixteenth century in Spanish America. As part of complex family strategies designed to gain desirable marriage partners for their children, many young girls were placed in convents prior to their marriages to insulate them from the temptations of the secular world. Although most nuns had strong religious convictions and entered convents to realize their desire for a life of prayer and contemplation, other women were placed in convents by their parents to reduce a family's number of potential heirs and to protect against the depletion of resources by the payment of dowries. Diego de Zárate of La Plata, Upper Peru, for example, installed three of his six daughters in a local convent. When one of them died, he arranged for a fourth daughter to replace her in the convent. Convents were established later in Brazil than in the Spanish colonies. Before the first convents were established, Brazilian elite families sent unmarried daughters to join convents in Portugal and the Azores, thus restricting the local pool of potential brides for elite males. The Portuguese Crown finally banned this practice in 1732, more than half a century after the foundation of the first nunnery in Salvador, Bahia. The foundation of additional convents in the colony allowed more families, including some of modest means, to manage the marriage options of their daughters more conveniently.

Family Size

Given limited family planning options, family size in the colonial world was largely determined by the wife's age at marriage. In early modern Spain a relatively late marriage age (twenty-five years on average) limited a woman's reproductive period to approximately fifteen years. Once married, a Spanish woman of the era was likely to have five or six children. By way of comparison, women in the Spanish colonies married about three years earlier on average than did their Spanish contemporaries, and their longer average reproductive span led to additional births. Colonial fertility and mortality rates had an ethnic character as well. Native women had both higher fertility and a shorter life expectancy than did European or *casta* women. The brutal oppression of slave women predictably led to low levels of life expectancy, reduced fertility, and high rates of infant mortality.

Given the era's high infant and childhood mortality rates, scholars estimate that roughly half of all children born in the colonies died before reaching adulthood. Because the urban and rural poor suffered from chronic nutritional deprivation; lived in smaller, poorly ventilated homes; had limited access to potable water; and worked in the most dangerous and arduous jobs, they universally experienced both lower fertility and higher mortality rates than did elite and middle groups. But the material advantages of better off sectors of the population, including more access to medical practitioners, translated into only marginal improvements in life expectancy. Women from the elite were as threatened by complications of pregnancy and child birth as were the poor.

Many women bore children outside marriage. Poor women frequently worked outside the home from an early age and some used this greater autonomy to engage in sexual experimentation that could lead to pregnancies. Many poor

women became pregnant as the result of sexual attacks or other forms of coercion. Among young indigenous men and women trial marriages were common before the imposition of colonial rule. Called *sirvinacuy* in the Peruvian Andes, these trial marriages were intended to test the compatibility of a young couple and therefore promise the likelihood of an enduring marriage. After the conquest, the Catholic Church attempted unsuccessfully to eradicate this practice because it directly challenged the sacrament of marriage. In the 1570s Viceroy Toledo stated that the practice endured because the natives believed that it was necessary to establish the "peace, contentment, and friendship" of a marriage.³

Elite and other propertied families, on the other hand, viewed premarital sex and illegitimate birth as threatening to their status and did everything they could to supervise contact between young men and women. The Church and public opinion tended to be more permissive about premarital sexual relations if a woman had received the "promise of marriage" from a suitor prior to engaging in sex. Children born in these relationships could be legitimized even if the parents never married. Sexual relations initiated without the promise of marriage or other commitments were more common, however. In both Brazil and Mexico in the eighteenth century, evidence suggests that perhaps 20 to 40 percent of all children were born illegitimate in the opinion of the authorities of church and state.⁴

The majority of illegitimate children born to poor *casta*, black, and Indian mothers were raised in single-parent households. Among whites, however, only a small minority of illegitimate children were acknowledged by their mothers. For the elite, the fear of damaging family reputations provoked efforts to keep secret the pregnancies of unmarried daughters and the birth of illegitimate children. Many of these children, as a result, suffered cruel fates, left at the door of an orphanage, given to servants or poor relations to raise as their own, or simply abandoned. On occasion, however, priests were willing to connive with a powerful family to create a fiction that would protect the woman's reputation while allowing her to raise her child. Typically, this meant claiming the child was a foundling adopted as an act of Christian charity.

Because elite families sought to emulate the family patterns of the European nobility, the largest families in the Spanish colonies and Brazil were often found at the top of the social order. Many elite women married at an early age and, if widowed, soon remarried while still in childbearing years. The fact that children of such families had access to better diet, hygiene, and housing meant that they had a marginally better chance of reaching adulthood than did the children of the poor. Some colonial families tried to manage fertility and control family size, but the absence of reliable means of contraception other than sexual abstinence meant this was difficult at best. The teachings of the Catholic Church and prevailing custom were unambiguously pronatalist and identified all efforts to avoid pregnancy such as *coitus interruptus* as sinful. Despite these strictures, many women still looked for ways to avoid or terminate unwanted pregnancies. They sought out curers, midwives, and witches (*brujas*) who provided potions, amulets, and

salves to end pregnancies, although these desperate measures seldom had any practical efficacy. Nevertheless, the Inquisition detained and prosecuted anyone known to have offered these services. Women also often prolonged breastfeeding to lower the chances of additional pregnancies. One adult daughter from a large family recalled her mother's plight: "I remember quite well that when I had reached the age of five, my mother still nursed me at her breast . . . to avoid childbirth yet again. After I was born she began to entreat the Lord to send her no more children, for she was quite worn out with the number she already had. But the Lord, who knows full well what is best for us, did not grant her wish; and yet again, to test her patience, after I turned five He sent her twice more into childbirth."⁵ Some modern scholars have pointed out that the common reliance of elite women on wet nurses to breastfeed their children may have unintentionally contributed to increased fertility and larger family size. The family size of slaves who served as wet nurses in elite and middle group households, on the other hand, may have been somewhat smaller because of the extended lactation of women who served as wet nurses.

The Family as an Economic Unit

The tumultuous nature of Latin American society and economy in the first century of the colonial period compelled individuals from all classes, ethnicities, and regions to continuously weigh economic risks and opportunities. For the most successful members of society, the objective was to establish a store of wealth, power, and reputation that could endure for generations. For the middling groups, including lower-level churchmen and government officials, retail merchants, the owners of modest farms and ranches as well as for some members of hereditary native elites, the objectives were shorter term but similar. They sought to protect and pass on their hard-won status and material circumstances to their heirs. Among the impoverished masses of colonial society, the natives, slaves, free day laborers, and poor artisans, the aspirations of individuals and families were more modest, securing adequate food and shelter each day.

Once the rudimentary institutions of the colonial political and economic order were in place, the key components of the Iberian social order began to take hold and thrive. Key to the achievement of relative social stability was the successful adaptation of the Iberian family to American economic and cultural realities. The elites of the Iberian colonies viewed the family as an essential bulwark for the long-term protection of wealth and prestige. Whether individual status was acquired during the era of conquest, earned in the early exploitation of New World natural resources, or, alternatively, acquired through the patronage networks that staffed the bureaucracies of state and Church, the rich and powerful sought to mobilize their families to protect and enhance their existing advantages. Their objective was to perpetuate family wealth and reputation across the generations, regardless of changes in imperial policies or fluctuations in the performance of the colonial economy. The elite understood these objectives to be so important that decisions about marriage partners, the education of children, and career

choices of family members were generally made by the richest and most powerful male family members, rather than by the individuals whose life paths were being decided. These advantaged families sought to protect their reputations for religious and racial purity while managing their wealth and social status against risks and misfortunes.

Very few important colonial families in the sixteenth century could trace their social ascendancy to the elevated social position of ancestors in Spain or Portugal. In most cases, their elevated status resulted from the military achievements of one or more participants in the conquest or from wealth acquired during the early settlement period. Among elite Spanish American families the windfalls of the age of conquest (like the spoils from Atahualpa's ransom or the grant of an *encomienda*) were reinforced by the early 1600s by marriage alliances with wealthy silver miners or wealthy land owners. The Brazilian pattern was similar, but the Portuguese colony's smaller indigenous population, the slow development of the sugar export economy, and the establishment of relatively few colonial administrative positions slowed the accumulation of elite family wealth and social power.

In the seventeenth century many of these families faced a series of challenges. The native population declines that resulted from epidemics meant that few descendants of the first *encomenderos* in Spanish America were able to bequeath to heirs the levels of wealth and political influence they themselves had enjoyed. Similarly, while silver mining had quickly produced enormous riches in Mexico and Peru, it also proved to be a volatile and unreliable foundation for elite status across the generations, since rich veins of silver could unexpectedly play out or mines flood, leading, in some cases, to the humiliation of bankruptcy. As a result of chronic instability, only a handful of affluent and prominent colonial families after 1650 were directly descended from conquerors, *encomenderos*, or miners of the early decades. Instead, they were most often the beneficiaries of the mature colonial economy which was linked to distant markets by Atlantic commerce or, alternatively, were chief functionaries of colonial administration or the Catholic Church hierarchy.

In Brazil, the steady expansion of settlements into the interior, the growth of the sugar industry, and the discovery of gold and other precious minerals at the end of the seventeenth century combined to provide new opportunities to accumulate wealth and elevate elite status. The development of huge cattle ranches in the Brazilian northeast, for example, was tied to the growing wealth of the sugar sector, to the growth in urban population, and to expanded Atlantic trade. The Dias d'Avila and Guedes de Brito families, among the most prominent of those exploiting this new economic frontier, were able to establish de facto sovereignty over an immense region. Collectively, they waged war against native peoples and in 1696 demonstrated their political power by evicting the Jesuits from a nearby mission. In São Paulo, to the south, the wealth of the elite expanded rapidly due to growing exports of both Indian slaves taken in raids in the interior and the development of new agricultural products, like wheat, rum, and cotton. In these

regions of Brazil, as in the Spanish colonies, economic diversification and control of political offices helped protect elite families' advantages against the potentially disruptive effects of economic instability.

Despite recourse to time-tested strategies, many once-prominent colonial families declined or disappeared completely. Some died out after two or three generations due to the deaths of heirs or infertility or to the decision of heirs to remain single. More typically, the status of elite families was undermined by the unpredictable workings of the colonial economy. Fortunes could be lost if a ship carrying a merchant's goods to Iberia was captured by pirates or destroyed by storms. Rich mines could stop producing silver ores or flood. Herds and flocks could be lost to theft or disease. Since even the most prominent families typically carried debt burdens of tens of thousands of pesos from purchases and commercial transactions, a succession of relatively small misfortunes could provoke a financial crisis with the potential to destroy the accumulated economic achievement of generations of ancestors.

The longevity of the Gómez de Cervantes family in the top tier of Mexican society provides a notable exception to the subversive impact of economic volatility on elite family status. Resident in central Mexico since the conquest, this family retained its prominence and wealth into the decades after independence in 1821. Even though the durability of its economic and social power was extraordinary, the strategies the family pursued were not. Strategic marriages in the early colonial period linked the Gómez de Cervantes family to other families of conquistadors and *encomenderos*. In later generations, it sought marriage alliances for its sons that generated substantial dowries of cash or property, strengthening the family's economic position. Similarly, the family provided attractive dowries for daughters that facilitated marriages with men who held prestigious positions in the colonial bureaucracy, thus reinforcing its reputation for racial and religious purity. The resulting endowment of wealth and prestige was ultimately protected by the establishment of an entail, *mayorazgo* (called *morgado* in Brazil).

A *mayorazgo* (or *morgado*) bundled a wealthy family's key assets (especially real property and other valuable income-producing goods) in a legally binding way that restricted any future division through inheritance or sale. Once created, the wealth placed in entail could not be liquidated by the inheritance claims of children other than the eldest male (or eldest female in a family without an eligible male) or to satisfy debts. It meant, in effect, that in each generation a single heir would receive the bulk of a family's wealth as well as the assured high social status a large estate conferred, rather than it being divided in reduced shares among all legitimate heirs as the law required in cases without an entail. For this reason, the wills of some elite parents required the heir to an entail to provide some support for less fortunate brothers and sisters.

For elite families unprotected by entail, family wealth tended to slowly dissipate with each generation of heirs poorer than their parents; this decline in status was seldom precipitous, and the privileges and social eminence of a prominent family could be shored up through marriage alliances or economic diversification.

Some of the children entered the priesthood or joined a convent. Others found the means through family connections or individual initiative to create their own economic enterprise. Many males sought positions in the colonial bureaucracy, often as provincial administrators. In these cases, successful service to the colonial state allowed heirs, in turn, to solicit more prestigious and more remunerative offices later in their careers. None of these actions worked in every circumstance, but taken together they often had the potential to prolong a family's prominence for generations.

Parents in humble circumstances also attempted to give their children the skills and resources necessary to maintain if not improve their circumstances. For artisans and small retailers, this meant the placement of sons as apprentices in a craft or in a merchant's shop. For the sons of lower-level colonial officials, military men, and professionals like lawyers and surgeons, this meant providing some primary schooling or, in a minority of cases, a university education. While some of these families provided daughters with tutors who offered a basic education, few young women had viable opportunities other than marriage. But, in some cases, parents were able to place their daughters in a convent where literacy was promoted along with other skills thought suitable for women of modest, but respectable origins, like needlework.

Small inheritances from the estates of parents could prove especially influential in the lives of men and women with little wealth and few resources. Juana Carvajal of Buenos Aires received a single male slave from the estate of her widowed father. During her lifetime, she sold this slave to finance the purchase of two young slaves who were subsequently trained as carpenters. She then used their earnings to fund the purchase of a small rural property. When she died in 1746, her two sons and husband inherited a secure economic position because of Juana's careful management of her small inheritance.

In seventeenth-century Brazil, women more often benefitted from strategies to preserve family status intergenerationally than did their male siblings. Many ambitious families believed that providing their daughters with dowries to facilitate advantageous marriages was more important than protecting the future inheritances of sons. In these cases, the commitment of family wealth to secure suitable marriage partners for daughters often forced sons to relocate to frontier zones where they could make their own fortunes through slave raids on frontier Indian communities or in the development of agricultural estates. When Maria Gonçalves married in 1623, for example, her dowry was more than triple the value of her brother's inheritance eighteen years later. The logic of these decisions was stipulated more than a hundred years later by Bento Pais de Oliveira: "I have seven children . . . and as my sons have the natural ability to care of themselves and even though the love I have for all my children is the same, piety and compassion dictate that I think more of my daughters."⁶ Ultimately, such discrimination against sons led the Portuguese Crown to place upper limits on the size of dowries to protect the interests of other potential heirs.



Husbands and wives commonly worked together to earn their living. In this illustration a husband and wife produce rough pottery to be sold in their village.

The Effects of Inheritance Law

The inheritance laws of Spain and Portugal severely limited discretionary authority over the disposition of an estate. Except in the case of an entail, all wealth acquired by a husband and wife during a marriage was divided among surviving heirs according to a formula that provided only limited flexibility in Spanish America. Once widowed, a woman regained control of her dowry, if she had one, as well as inheriting any *arras* her husband had provided at the time of marriage. She also inherited half of all wealth generated during the marriage. At the time her husband died, of course, the widow was often already a mother or grandmother

who would pass on the value of the dowry and *arras* to her children or grandchildren. While inheritance law mandated certain dispositions, it did allow parents to further family ambitions by favoring one or more children over others. It also allowed those who had suffered long illnesses to recognize and reward their caretakers. For example, Rosario Salas of Chile used this discretionary power to provide a dowry that would allow her daughter Ana Josefa to enter a convent, thus recognizing the loving care she had provided to her during her final illness.

Unless the family could agree to shared management, it was likely that agricultural or mining enterprises as well as large landed estates would be sold and divided among heirs to meet the law's requirements. This formula also often disrupted commercial and manufacturing enterprises, where the mandated division put an end to most forms of business partnership. Many wealthy families who had not pursued the expensive alternative of entail (*mayorazgo*) understood that heirs or executors would manipulate the distribution of property within the requirements of inheritance law to protect ongoing economic activities. Thus, some heirs might receive their share of inherited wealth in the form of clothing, household goods, jewelry or even a residence while others gained full control of ranches, mines, and slaves.

Portuguese inheritance law was broadly similar to the Spanish model but mandated a more egalitarian distribution among heirs except in cases of entail (*morgado*). This meant that the dowry and any other property owned by husband or wife at the time of marriage would be divided among heirs. In both Iberian traditions, through a written will a decedent could make a differential bequest of a third of the estate to a favored heir. Even when the Portuguese reformed inheritance law in the eighteenth century, parents retained the right to prefer one heir over others, although entails were restricted.

WOMEN IN COLONIAL SOCIETIES AND ECONOMIES

In these colonial hierarchies dominated by race and social standing, gender also played an important role in determining an individual's place. Colonial society was patriarchal, and the activities of men and women, and thus husbands and wives, reflected this differentiation of roles. In accord with established gender roles, men held all civil offices, made political decisions, and usually dominated the most lucrative economic activities. Men most commonly performed the heavy manual labor of fields and mines, constructed buildings and ships, worked on roads, and transported goods as carriers, muleteers, and seamen. They performed military service and held all ecclesiastical posts, except those in the convents. And only males could secure a higher education or enter a *consulado* or, in most cases, an artisan guild.

The everyday social and economic realities of colonial life were far more complex than is suggested by this description of a largely male-dominated society and any general summary obscures the full range of women's. Among the elite, women,

notably widows, managed vast and complex holdings of mines, agricultural properties, and real estate. When husbands were absent or when women headed households as single parents, they often filled traditional male positions in the economy as managers, landlords, farmers, and ranchers.

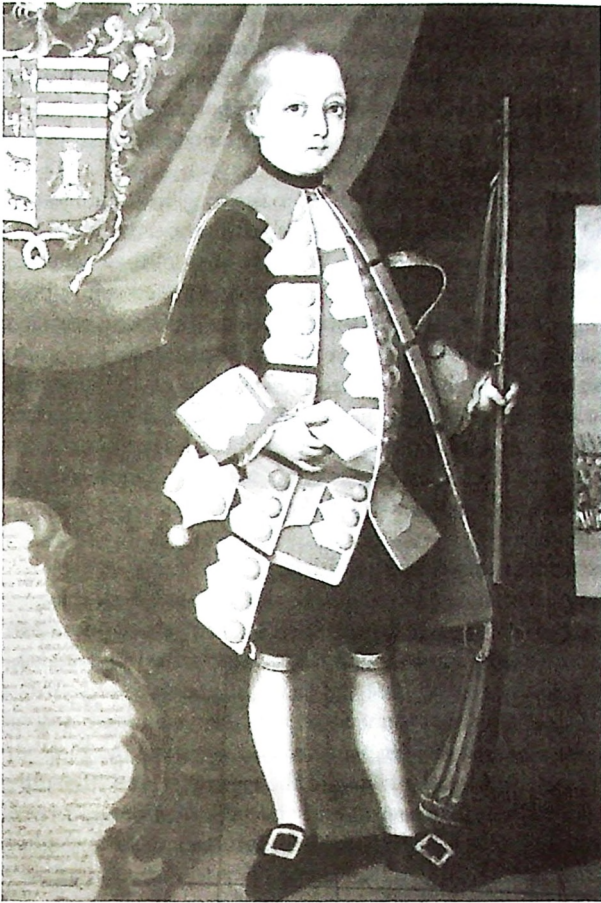
Among the less-advantaged classes, women dominated most public markets as buyers and sellers. They also held marginal, and sometimes dangerous, positions in medicine and religion as curers, potion makers, fortune tellers, and spirit mediums. The capital investments, labor, and entrepreneurial skills of women were particularly significant in less privileged groups. Among the rural and urban working classes, few families were able to survive on only the income earned by the male head of household, as the cost of basic necessities almost invariably exceeded the income of any single worker, whether peon, cowboy, weaver, cobbler, blacksmith, or carpenter. Certainly, the labor of wives and daughters was crucial to the survival of small farms.

Work Outside the Home

Many women worked outside the home. Brazil's sugar estates and smaller cane farms depended on the labor of slave and free women throughout the production cycle, but especially during harvest. Small independent farmers and ranchers also relied on the labor of wives and daughters, as few produced enough income to hire temporary workers. In rural Uruguay, for example, women and their children owned and worked a substantial number of independent farms. Retail sales in many urban and rural markets were largely dependent on women, who sold thread, brooms, and other handicrafts as well as produced and sold sweets, bread, and pastries. Women also held an important place in colonial manufacturing: Some skilled textile manufacture was completely in their hands, and in Mexico City as early as the sixteenth century, there were female guilds with female officers. Women also worked in textile and ceramic factories or *obrajes*. In Guadalajara in 1769, for example, women owned one third of the city's bakeries. And, in the chief mining centers of the Andes like Potosí, indigenous women were essential to the refining process, wielding heavy hammers to break up silver ore carried to the surface by their husbands.

Even in artisan trades, in which female participation was strictly forbidden, women commonly contributed essential labor. Poorer masters who could not afford the wages of journeymen or the expense of an apprentice relied heavily on the labor of their wives and children to prepare raw materials and maintain tools. Typically, a master shoemaker sewed the finished shoes and boots but relied on his wife to prepare and cut the leather. Despite guild regulations that required a widow to remarry from among eligible guild members to keep her husband's shop open, widows commonly ignored this requirement, becoming in effect independent master artisans without formal license.

All elite households required female domestics to cook, clean, and serve as wet nurses. Few of these women were free. Early in the colonial era nearly all female servants were *encomienda* Indians compelled to serve a Spanish master.



Childhood was viewed as an anticipation of adult life. In this eighteenth-century portrait of Joaquin Sanchez Pareja Narvaez, a young boy, he is posed in a military uniform with a rifle.

Once in place, the compulsory labor of natives survived in some Latin American regions into the twentieth century. On frontiers, continuing warfare with indigenous peoples provided a steady flow of female captives forced to supplement the labor of bound *encomienda* Indians in domestic service. The African slave trade contributed an even larger stream of women compelled to serve others, and nearly every elite household in Spanish America and Brazil had black slaves, the majority of them women. This exploited population cleaned, cooked, made clothes, and provided nearly all the essential household services.

Female slaves were often included in dowries, suggesting the belief that enslaved servants were essential to a “decent” household. A smaller number of poor

free women were employed as domestic servants as well, their lives almost indistinguishable in drudgery and material poverty from those of Indian and slave servants. But free women, no matter how poor, could seek alternative employment, had greater volition in the selection of marriage partners, and were less likely to experience. The "freedom" of the poor was constrained and tightly circumscribed, but it was also meaningful.

Female slaves were more likely than males to gain their freedom through manumission. Among these women, the largest number purchased freedom by earning the money to pay their owners the equivalent of their market value. This demonstrates that even enslaved women operated in the economy, producing and selling goods or providing labor for compensation. This broad engagement in the economy, especially in cities, made slave women primary agents of cultural change for the slave community. But these women were also more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, as were the indigenous women who served in Spanish and Portuguese households. As a result, they were coerced participants in the emergence of mixed-race populations and the forging of new cultural identities that blended the traditions of America and Africa with those of Europe.

Household and Family Responsibilities

The chief responsibilities of wives in elite and mid-level families were associated with the home. They were expected to bear and rear children to adulthood, manage household and domestic affairs, and instill cultural values in children and, to some degree, servants both free and slave. Although the Spanish and Portuguese ideal called for married women to devote themselves to being mothers and wives, elite women often took an active role in ensuring the family's economic well-being. Many elite women managed their dowries and, if family resources were mismanaged by an incompetent husband, actively directed large enterprises. When husbands traveled to supervise distant investments in agriculture, mining, or commercial ventures, wives often assumed day-to-day responsibility for managing households as well as family-owned rental properties, shops, or even plantations and mines. The death of a husband meant these responsibilities devolved more permanently on the surviving spouse.

One of the most remarkable examples of this pattern was Doña Jerónima de Peñalosa, widow of a wealthy and powerful lawyer who in the sixteenth century had served as a judge and as an adviser to the viceroy of Peru. Once widowed, Doña Jerónima managed the family's vast economic holdings, which included real estate, orchards, farms, mines, and a sugar mill in addition to property in Spain. She never remarried and, by the end of her life, was able to pass on to her heirs an estate larger than that she had inherited from her husband. Her eldest son inherited the largest portion on her death, an entailed estate, which placed him at the pinnacle of the colonial social order. Her other children were also richly provided for, with three sons sent to Spain for university educations, one placed in the Church hierarchy, and a daughter granted a rich dowry of 35,000 pesos.⁷

Despite some legal obstacles to a woman serving as executor of a deceased husband's estate, the practice became much more common at all levels of society by the eighteenth century. In short, women owned and operated, at times with the aid of male relatives, rural and urban properties, mines, *obrajes*, and other economic investments. Some widows were then able to pass on these rich assets to their daughters as dowries or inheritances. A sketch of the Baquijano y Carrillo de Córdoba family illustrates the importance of marriage and kinship ties, diversified investments, varied occupations, and a widow's continuation of her late husband's business activities in an extended elite colonial family: Juan Bautista Baquijano emigrated to Lima from Vizcaya in the early eighteenth century, became a partner of a prominent compatriot merchant, and prospered. At the age of forty-four he married the twenty-year-old *limeña* María Ignacia Carrillo de Córdoba, the daughter of a distinguished family that could trace its ancestry to conquistadors and early settlers in Chile and Peru. The marriage was a classic match between a wealthy, older peninsular and an established creole elite family with extensive familial ties in the region.

After marriage, Juan Bautista continued to prosper. One of Lima's wealthiest residents, he had investments in shipping, commerce, and agriculture. In 1755 he purchased the title Conde de Vistaflorida. His death in 1759 left his wife with seven minor children. María Ignacia continued her late husband's business ventures with the assistance of her brother, a chaplain at the viceregal palace. The estate she left to her heirs substantially exceeded that she inherited from Juan Bautista.

The surviving Baquijano y Carrillo children extended the family's influence and power. The elder son and second Conde de Vistaflorida settled in Madrid, where he invested in commerce, lent money, bought government bonds, and provided his relatives with a convenient voice at court. The younger son, José, became a minister on Lima's *audiencia*. Given the family's wealth, it is surprising that neither son married. Through marriage, however, the five Baquijano daughters further strengthened the family's eminence. Their husbands brought expanded ties to the city council, the *consulado*, the militia, the *audiencia*, and even the viceroy. The diversification of political ties, incorporation of successful peninsulars, and continuing investment in shipping, agriculture, and trade typified a prominent family's strategy to maintain and enhance its position.

THE CULTURE OF HONOR

Along with other elements of Iberian culture, Spanish and Portuguese immigrants brought to the Americas a fundamental concern for honor. Honor meant the recognition and defense of both individual and family position in the social hierarchy. It was a way of sorting out the colonial world's incredibly complex relationships of class, gender, race, wealth, and culture. As defined by a modern scholar, "Honor is above all the keen sensitivity to the experience of humiliation and shame, a sensitivity manifested by the desire to be envied by others and the propensity to envy the success of others."⁸

Honor preoccupied elite families. They paid close attention to every interaction, from the competition for offices and rewards, to business dealings of all kinds, the marriages of children, the selection of godparents, and even seating arrangements at public dinners. Honor defined one's equals and inferiors. As such, it controlled who was invited into a home, who stood and who sat, who kept a hat on and who removed it. Disagreements over the order in which administrative groups, clerics, or colonial officials marched through the streets during feast days or celebrations of the coronation of kings produced lawsuits that lasted years. If individuals or groups allowed themselves to be treated as inferiors without protest or revenge, if they failed to react appropriately to challenges to their honor, they lost status. The competing claims to honor and precedence both arranged society hierarchically and potentially destabilized it.

Wealthy and powerful families worked together to improve their reputations, creating the material basis for their claims to honor. This meant the careful management of marriage alliances, inheritances, and the cultivation of friendships with other powerful and ambitious families. Dowries were therefore key tools used to arrange marriage alliances with, for example, a man of noble blood or an immigrant from Iberia with strong prospects for advancement. One observer of marriage practices in São Paulo, Brazil, noted: "The Paulistas could give their daughters extensive land, Indians, and slaves in their dowries. . . . [W]hen they selected husbands for them, they were more concerned with the birth [ethnicity and noble descent] rather than the property of their future sons-in-law."⁹

Families also sought to secure offices in the bureaucracy, militia commands, or prestigious positions in religious brotherhoods. This pursuit of reputation was often very expensive and wasteful. It required large gifts to endow churches or convents or support for civic projects or local celebrations. It also led to the maintenance of a lavish household with numerous servants, generous feasts, and entertainments for guests as well as the careful cultivation of public image. In the pursuit of visibility and honor, the act of going from home to church or to an audience with the viceroy was viewed as a performance requiring the mobilization of family resources, clothes, jewels, elegant transportation, and the escort of servants and dependents. This desire for honor and prestige also helps to explain why so many who had gained their wealth through commerce found it necessary to buy vast landed estates. More than serving as a source of collateral for loans, such properties enabled the purchaser to meet the expectations of already-established members of the elite who viewed direct participation in commerce as an embarrassment. These concerns explain this group's commonly expressed disdain for the mixed-race population and the poor, groups presumed to have no claims to honor. These ambitious families also pursued family honor in a highly gendered way. Males sought to exercise close control over wives and daughters, since their sexual reputations put the honor of males at risk. As a result, women in elite families were restricted in their movements

and closely supervised by male relatives or an older woman of impeccable honor. Poor women enjoyed none of these protections against the advances of men in the street or market. But honor was not a rigid template that fixed all social relationships in predictable ways. Elite men and women found their way around this close supervision as they pursued love or lust. Priests sometimes connived to disguise an illegitimate birth by identifying the child as an orphan who might then be "adopted" by the birth mother. Or, if an elite family offered a generous dowry, a shamed daughter might still find a potential husband from among the socially ambitious middle class.

Although the illegitimacy of a man or his immediate ancestors was supposed to bar him from high colonial office, many rich and connected men found ways around the prohibition. Similarly, despite evidence that an individual's ancestor was a Jew or Muslim or black, ambitious and powerful men sometimes found ways to escape the consequences. A common resort in these cases was a personal appeal to the king beseeching him to remove the obstacle; these requests were commonly lubricated by a substantial gift to benefit the Crown. By the eighteenth century this process of appeal for the removal of what were viewed as stains on reputation was regularized as *cédulas de gracias al sacar*.

Elite families saw honor as a unique characteristic of their class, but a concern for honor spread across the social order. Members of the urban middle sector—physicians, lawyers, and even master artisans—came eventually to assert their honor in legal proceedings and, on occasion, in violent confrontations with those who presumed to insult them. Men of humble circumstances, such as journeymen and day laborers, explained their violent assaults on rivals in terms of the social expectation that an insult could not be accepted without a loss of honor and the acceptance of enduring shame. Even among the society's most vulnerable group, slaves, there was a clear regard for reputation, and when an individual was offended by insult, a willingness to find remedy in violence or even in the courts.

The basic social unit in the colonial world, the extended family, proved most useful to those at the upper levels of wealth and power. As each region in the Indies achieved economic and social maturity, the most prominent local families intermarried as well as incorporating prominent newcomers, especially peninsular males, through marriage. Although the timing varied, this establishment and consolidation of extended families took place in settings as diverse as Recife, Salvador, Santiago, Lima, Popayán, Guatemala, and Puebla. Indian societies also sought to maintain family status, although epidemics, forced relocation, and voluntary migration worked against their efforts to perpetuate social advantages. The free mixed-race population found the greatest difficulty in realizing this family ideal. The prevalence of illegitimacy among the early generations undermined efforts to mimic the familial ties and networks of support common at the higher levels of society. But as the number of persons of mixed ancestry expanded, their families increasingly conformed to the colonial ideal of the extended family.

NOTES

1. Edith Couturier, "Women and the Family in Eighteenth-Century Mexico: Law and Practice," *Journal of Family History* (Fall 1985), p. 297.
2. Ana María Presta, "Portraits of Four Women: Traditional Female Roles and Transgressions in Colonial Elite Families in Charcas, 1550–1600," *Colonial Latin American Review*, 9:2 (2000), pp. 245–246.
3. Quote in Ward Stavig, *The World of Tupac Amaru: Conflict, Community, and Identity in Colonial Peru* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), p. 41.
4. Robert McCaa, "Gustos de los padres, inclinaciones de los novios y reglas de una feria nupcial colonial: Parral, 1770–1814," *Historia Mexicana*, 40:4 (1991), p. 583.
5. Quote from Kathleen Myers, "A Glimpse of Family Life in Colonial Mexico: A Nun's Account," *Latin American Research Review*, 28:2 (1993), p. 75.
6. Quote in Alida C. Metcalf, "Fathers and Sons: The Politics of Inheritance in a Colonial Brazilian Township," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 66:3 (1986), p. 480.
7. Ana María Presta, "Portraits of Four Women," pp. 242–244.
8. William Ian Miller, *Humiliation and Other Essays on Honor, Social Discomfort, and Violence* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 84.
9. Quote in Alida C. Metcalf, "Fathers and Sons: The Politics of Inheritance in a Colonial Brazilian Township," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 66:3 (1986), p. 467.

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CHAPTER 8



Living in an Empire

CHRONOLOGY

1493	Columbus introduces European plants and animals in Santo Domingo
1521	Mexico City founded
1535	Lima founded; first book published in Mexico
1537	First royal <i>protomédico</i> reaches Lima
1548	First cattle introduced in Chile
1553	University of Mexico opens
1573	Ordinance to regulate urban planning
1570s	University of San Marcos opens in Lima
1580	Permanent settlement in Buenos Aires
1604	Theater (Corral de las Comedias) opens in Lima
1629	Worst flood in Mexico City's history
1631	Crown tries to prohibit entry of Chinese silks into Peru
1641	First printing press in Guatemala
1687	Earthquake devastates Lima
1695	Death of Sister Juana Inés de la Cruz in Mexico
1746	Earthquake devastates Callao and Lima
1773	Earthquake prompts relocation of Guatemala City
1787	Spanish Crown orders burials moved from churches to suburban cemeteries
1808	First printing press in Brazil

COLONIAL SETTINGS

European conquest and settlement irreversibly altered the New World's architectural environment. The progression from indigenous to mature colonial architecture was clearest in central Mexico and Peru where the conquerors' cathedrals, convents, administrative buildings, and private residences soon complemented or replaced the pyramids, elevated plazas, ball courts, and palaces constructed at the direction of the Aztec and Inka elites. In regions outside the great Mesoamerican and Andean civilizations, the Spaniards established new towns and cities unencumbered by indigenous architectural legacies and city plans. Eventually, however, common features of

a colonial style in construction and town planning appeared across Spanish America. The absence of large indigenous urban centers in Brazil meant that Portuguese colonial urbanization also followed this path, adapting European architecture and city planning to the realities of American landscapes and climate. In the countryside Spanish and Portuguese settlers tended to locate their dispersed settlements near indigenous populations so that they could benefit from forced native labor.

Urban Centers

Once effective military control was established, Spanish and Portuguese settlers moved quickly to create an urban landscape that reflected colonial political and cultural realities. Indigenous cities, like Tenochtitlan, Quito and Cuzco, were transformed to serve the needs of the new colonial order. In other cases, the Spaniards created new municipalities, like Veracruz, Buenos Aires, and Lima. By 1620 the Spanish had founded over 190 towns and cities in the Americas, at least half of them by 1550. Selected as viceregal capitals, Mexico City and Lima were the largest Spanish colonial cities; following them in importance were cities like Puebla, Bogotá, Guatemala, Santo Domingo, and Santiago de Chile. By comparison, urbanization progressed much more slowly in colonial Brazil. By 1650 the Portuguese had established fewer than forty cities, most located close to the Atlantic coast. While some of these early Spanish and Portuguese cities were later abandoned, nearly all of modern Latin America's major cities had been established well before the end of the seventeenth century.

The Iberians founded most of their colonial cities to achieve a mix of administrative, strategic, and religious purposes. These urban centers hosted key colonial judicial, fiscal, and administrative institutions, each with recognizable political hierarchies and, often, with numerous employees. Parallel with this rapid evolution of secular political functions, the Catholic Church developed its own urban-based ritual and administrative structures in these same cities. Combined, the personnel and expenditures of state and church played a key role in supplementing or, in some cases, replacing the rank order of cities established following first contacts by virtue of strategic location, the size of nearby native populations, physical resources, and potential for commercial activity.

The efforts by both settlers and colonial officials to profit from the new colonies spurred the rapid development of mining and export agriculture. Deep-shaft mining, common for silver extraction, concentrated masses of labor, heavy machinery, and capital. Many of the most productive mining camps quickly became major urban centers. Among the most important and enduring of these rapidly evolving urban places were Potosí (Bolivia) and Zacatecas (Mexico), but other mining sites also attracted rapid population growth. The discovery of gold in Brazil at the end of the seventeenth century, for example, produced a similar pattern, with Minas Gerais and Ouro Preto growing quickly into rich and populous cities. The development of port cities including Cartagena, Havana, Vera Cruz, Bahia, and Rio de Janeiro reflected the development of transatlantic trade with Iberia and the integration of the Spanish and Portuguese empires into the rapidly expanding

global economy. One measure of the effects of long-distance trade was that Latin American colonial cities often had closer ties to Seville, Spain or to Lisbon, Portugal than to each other.

The Spanish Crown promoted the use of a grid pattern in planning colonial cities and towns. A central plaza served as a marketplace, hosted religious and secular ceremonies, and displayed symbols of royal justice. In major administrative centers the cathedral, governor or viceroy's palace, and city council building were all sited around the plaza. Lesser cities had fewer and smaller public structures, but the plaza always provided the political and religious focus of community life. Brazilian cities and towns generally developed more spontaneously, but the largest and most important ones usually had a grid pattern at the center and a plaza complete with pillory as a symbol of royal justice. The coastal location of some important commercial and administrative cities, like Havana and Cartagena as well as Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, made them vulnerable to attack by foreign enemies. In these cases, defensive walls and other fortifications often influenced patterns of urban growth.

The Colonial City as Arena

European architecture and culture commonly dominated the rectilinear core or traza of colonial cities. At its heart lay a large central plaza that served as an arena for a variety of secular and religious spectacles. Around it crowded immense urban churches and convents that towered over their surroundings, demonstrating both the centrality of religious sentiment in colonial culture and the Church's great wealth. Few secular buildings in Latin America were as impressive as those constructed by the Church. Even the large and well-built viceregal palaces of Lima and Mexico City lacked the architectural impact of Europe's great palaces.

Colonial elites along with their servants and slaves lived near the city center, often in two-story dwellings built of cut stone or brick and featuring interior patios. Attached carriage houses and stables were common, but exteriors were seldom decorated. Heavy shutters protected windows, although second-story balconies, their privacy ensured by carved blinds, offered a view of the street below. Rich decoration graced the sitting rooms and bedrooms of these elite families. The wealthiest households displayed chairs and tables imported from Spain or Portugal; china, carpets, and silk curtains carried to the Americas by the Asian trade; settings of silver produced by skilled colonial artisans; and often musical instruments. A few had libraries, mostly filled with religious and moral tracts. Pious paintings, statuary, and other decorative objects were typical, but secular art, particularly portraits, became increasingly popular by the eighteenth century. This ostentatious display regularly impressed European visitors. Colonial policies that sought to prohibit the construction of unnecessarily expensive residences in Brazil largely failed to inhibit this desire of the rich to display their wealth.

The multistory homes of the richest colonial merchants typically devoted first-floor rooms to retail activities. In humbler single-story homes owned by poorer merchants and artisans, a corner room located on the intersection of streets



The central plaza, Zocalo, of Mexico City in 1797. A statue of King Charles IV of Spain was then located in front of the cathedral.

commonly served as a workshop or retail establishment. Other homeowners not directly involved in trade or manufacture frequently rented unused space to small shopkeepers and artisans as well. The result was a nearly universal intermixing of commerce, manufacture, and housing throughout the Iberian cities of America.

Sprawling impoverished districts, or *barrios*, that seldom displayed the orderliness of the city's central grid dominated the outer rings of urbanization. These districts were home to the majority of the poor, mostly Indians, *castas*, and free blacks. Small, mud-colored adobe houses fronted directly on the street. Only parish churches and poorer convents afforded architectural relief from the monotonous and squalid landscape of the poorer neighborhoods. During the rainy season the heavy carts and mule trains that connected cities to agricultural and mining communities turned these unpaved narrow streets into seas of mud where pedestrians passed at some peril. In dry seasons, winds coated passersby with dust from these often dung-covered thoroughfares.

Housing conditions in the poor *barrios* differed dramatically from those in the central *traza*. Large apartment blocks and single-family dwellings were the most desirable residences available to urban wage earners, but few could afford to own or even rent such accommodations. Many servants and slaves lived in the homes of their masters and many unmarried employees of artisans and shopkeepers lived in the back rooms of shops. The least fortunate members of colonial society found shelter in hallways, storerooms, or patios for a few *reales* a month. For

the totally destitute, life on the street was a last resort. Even when housing was available, urban workers accumulated very few material possessions; for example, an artisan might own a couple of straight-backed chairs, a rough table, a chest, straw-filled mattresses, and one or more religious icons. The poor ate their food with their hands or with a knife or spoon from wooden or cheap ceramic plates. Most wore their entire wardrobes on their backs, although some owned an extra shirt or a poncho that could double as a blanket.

The most unsanitary, dangerous, and noisy urban businesses were usually located in suburban *barrios*. Bakeries and the kilns of brick makers that posed fire threats, slaughterhouses and tanneries that exuded noxious odors, and the corrals that serviced local and long-distance freight businesses were scattered among the impoverished homes on the urban periphery. Numerous gaming and drinking establishments provided some pleasure and diversion to the urban poor. As a result, drunkenness and related acts of violence, like the endemic poverty and political powerlessness that engendered them, were familiar features of the urban landscape.

Rural Settlements

In regions without historic patterns of sedentary agriculture and urbanization before the arrival of Europeans, missionaries and colonial authorities encouraged the foundation of towns (*pueblos*) to organize and control the indigenous population. In these areas, the forced urbanization of native peoples was a key component of the colonial experience. Authorities of both Church and state forcibly concentrated native peoples to facilitate Christianization and to compel participation in the colonial economy. In cases where Europeans and native communities lived in proximity, settlers imposed their own concepts of urban social organization, architecture, and city planning, although some elements of indigenous experience survived.

Resettled Indian populations, called congregations or mission settlements—for example, the famous Jesuit reductions of Paraguay—also employed the European grid pattern, with the main church and other public buildings located on a central plaza. These buildings featured walled courtyards that offered a sheltered space for instructing crowds of Indian neophytes and converts as well as providing a defense against hostile attacks. In agricultural regions connected to local or international markets, Iberians and the descendants of indigenous high civilizations preferred to locate their households in villages rather than living in isolated individual residences and farms.

Villages often lacked a grid pattern and large-scale religious or secular buildings, and their social focus was as likely to be the local store as the church. Smaller villages commonly had a church but rarely a resident priest. Farmers lived near one another and walked to their fields. Where grazing was more important than agriculture—for example, in the Brazilian interior, the Río de la Plata region, and the *llanos* of Venezuela—on the other hand, dispersed residential patterns and greater isolation were much more common. Except for a handful of residences built of stone by wealthy landowners, residential construction in the countryside

used adobe and timber. These humble dwellings typically had only a single room and a small separate kitchen constructed of less substantial material.

By the early seventeenth century, sizeable estates, many painstakingly amassed over years through land grants, purchases, bequests, and usurpations of native lands, dominated much of the most valuable countryside in many parts of Latin America. In regions of very low population density, *haciendas*, *estancias*, and, in Brazil, *fazendas* provided the physical focus for social life as well as production. The owner's house dominated the *hacienda's* residential core, which might also include shops for one or more blacksmiths, potters, and carpenters. Although some wealthy *haciendas* maintained a chapel, resident priests were seldom present. The biggest estates covered many square miles and had outlying corrals, line shacks, and some dispersed housing for tenants.

The Brazilian *engenho*, or sugar refinery, required a much larger and more expensive labor force than did livestock raising and agriculture. The presence of more workers compelled planters to build larger residential compounds, including slave barracks. Since sugar refining was a complex, multistage procedure, plantations also required large investments in separate buildings for crushing the cane, boiling and skimming the juice, and storing the final product. The richest planters had surplus capital with which to construct impressive residences. A typical *casa grande* was built in a Portuguese style complete with a tower, roofs that inclined on all four sides, external stairs, and a long veranda. In these mostly two-story structures, family life was largely confined to an upper story.

The small ranches and farms of freeholders and tenants shared the rural landscape with the much wealthier *haciendas*, plantations, and, at times, Indian villages and missions. Isolated family housing was scattered along the northern frontier of New Spain, in the southern pampa of the Río de la Plata, and in the interior grazing area, the *llanos*, of Venezuela, and the southern frontier of Brazil. These impoverished inhabitants constructed their houses with adobe or woven sticks covered with mud. Door and window coverings were fashioned from animal skins. Furniture was almost unknown. Cattle skulls served as chairs, and packed-earth platforms covered with straw or skins as beds. The physical isolation of these dwellings diminished the material and emotional supports of the traditional Iberian and indigenous social networks. Other forms of cultural support—literacy and access to religious consolation among them—also were directly dependent on population density and seldom available except for larger towns.

The architectural environments of colonial Latin America helped give shape to a diverse mix of competing social groups. As in the advanced preconquest indigenous societies, colonial city planning, and urban architecture contained a political message that asserted and sustained the authority of the elites. The monumental architecture of the city center—the labor and wealth frozen in the walls and decorations of the cathedrals, convents, governmental offices, and palaces—served to awe and intimidate the masses. When used as an arena for *autos de fé*, bullfights, and executions, the central plazas helped direct the energies and anger of the masses toward safe symbolic targets.

For the masses, the physical settings provided by houses, gaming establishments, taverns, shops, and small manufacturers operated more subtly to help fashion the values of family and class that arose from the inequalities imposed by the colonial economy and Iberian social attitudes. The physical environment sometimes shaped and sometimes reinforced perceptions of race and gender, decisions about marriage and child rearing, and feelings of solidarity with or alienation from coworkers. More than a place to reside and work, these environments reflected both the highest aspirations and the deepest despair present in the colonial world.

Colonial Settlement and Natural Disasters

Devastating natural and manmade disasters periodically struck Latin America's colonial societies, afflicting particularly their poorest and most vulnerable sectors. Earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods brought tragedy to individuals, to families, and, at times, to cities and entire regions.

Earthquakes repeatedly caused terror. Thirteen violent quakes struck Lima, Peru, and its environs between 1582 and 1746. Two in 1687 hit Peru's central coast. Contemporaries claimed that, besides damaging numerous buildings in Lima and leaving thousands of people homeless, the quakes seriously disrupted and in some cases almost destroyed irrigation systems in coastal agricultural valleys. Disease followed hunger, and by the early 1690s Lima's population had declined by about 50 percent, falling to under 40,000. The city's merchants took advantage of the crisis to import wheat from Chile and soon created a reliance that continued throughout the eighteenth century, to the detriment of local producers.

In the 1746 earthquake, "the greatest part, if not all the buildings, great and small, in the whole city, were destroyed, burying under their ruins those inhabitants who had not made sufficient haste into the streets and squares."² Worse, an accompanying tsunami struck Lima's port of Callao, sinking nineteen ships in the harbor and carrying four inland. About 1,300 persons died in Lima, and only some 200 survivors in Callao remained of a population that had numbered roughly 4,000. The natural disaster was unparalleled in colonial Peru. Major earthquakes also struck Quito and other Ecuadoran sites repeatedly. Nearly twenty major earthquakes hit Chile between 1570 and 1800; those of 1647 and 1730 severely damaged the capital of Santiago.

Seismic activity afflicted Mesoamerica too. Mexico City and Jalisco were struck in 1611, and Oaxaca suffered a quake in 1701. Among the most devastating was the earthquake of 1773 that hit the capital city of Santiago, Guatemala. The destruction led to permanently moving the capital with its administrative offices twenty-eight miles to the valley of La Hermita, although thousands of inhabitants refused to abandon the old city.

Europeans knew about hurricanes' destructive power in the Caribbean since Columbus first witnessed one in 1494. The hastily built town of Santo Domingo was severely damaged in 1502 when winds ripped through its wooden structures. Although some stone was used in rebuilding, the violent storms of 1508 and 1509 again devastated the city. Nor was Cuba spared. Five ferocious hurricanes struck between 1519 and 1558, causing extensive damage across the island. In October

1768, a hurricane killed over 1,000 people, almost leveled the city of Havana, and destroyed more than 50 ships in the bay.

DAILY LIFE IN THE COLONIES

Deep divisions of race, wealth, gender, and language fractured colonial Latin American society and culture. The violent decades of European exploration and conquest established the fundamental fault lines. Wealth and power were concentrated in the largest colonial cities where, with only a handful of



A poor woman who earns her living doing laundry carries clothes to the river in Buenos Aires. This work was commonly done by slaves. Use of tobacco of all kinds was common among men and women of all classes.

exceptions, Europeans and their American-born descendants controlled the institutions of government and religion as well as the economy and commerce. Overwhelmingly, the poorest, the most vulnerable, and most exploited were natives, black slaves, and the mass of mixed-race peoples. This was a hierarchy created by violence and maintained by coercion. Although some women were rich and some poor, very few of any sector exercised real power or enjoyed real autonomy.

Disparities of wealth, power, and quality of life were ubiquitous in the countryside. The rural poor trapped in the grip of slavery, forced labor, or low wages experienced meager diets, poor health and the oppression of powerful landowners. These conditions were interrupted only by occasional religious rituals and secular celebrations. Urban dwellers enjoyed more frequent and varied entertainment, but most of them, too, lived a precarious existence marked by a long working day, minimal diet, and poor health. Crime and violence threatened urban and rural residents alike. Although elites alone had access to all the pleasures available in the colonial world, less-advantaged groups did find solace or pleasure in religious celebrations, drinking, music, games, gambling, and other diversions.

Clothing

Clothing revealed status in the colonial world just as it did in Europe. Early commentators noted the contrast between the finely woven and decorated cotton garments worn by indigenous nobles in central Mexico and Andean Peru and commoners' attire. All natives' clothing before the arrival of Iberians, however, was typically simple in design and shape. Indian weavers produced rectangular fabrics that were most easily wrapped into wearable garb or turned into straight-sided garments such as tunics, skirts, loincloths, ponchos, and capes. Shaped and closely fitted clothes were rare.

The early importation of steel shears from Europe soon transformed indigenous clothing. Shears enabled tailors to produce trousers, shirts, and other items favored by European males. The rapid expansion of flocks of sheep made wool widely accessible where cotton had earlier predominated. Imported cloth from Europe and later from East Asia added variety and fineness to the array of fabrics available for clothing, but few could afford these luxuries.

Clerical attitudes toward nakedness forced natives and blacks to adopt European-style clothing. Before long, Indian males were wearing long pants, shirts, and jackets or vests, sometimes under a native tunic. Native women's clothing changed less, although skirt length increased. Dress codes, of course, affected appearance only in public. To their dismay, clerics could not prevent, for example, Maya women from wearing "indecent and scandalous"—that is to say, "topless"—garb at home or Maya men from donning only a loincloth.¹

Not content with altering native dress, the Spanish issued legislation to freeze the imposed styles in time. Fashions changed for Spaniards, typically following European trends, and local and regional styles emerged as well. Natives, however,



By the eighteenth century, members of the colonial elite sought opportunities to display their wealth. This Mexican woman's dress is made from costly imported cloth, and she is posed next to a harpsichord for her portrait. The false beauty mark near her right eye was another common affectation.

were required to wear clothing of the same design generation after generation. Indeed, distinctive local garb—for example, hats with unique color or decoration—came to identify the wearer's village in the same way that today's baseball caps identify Cardinals or Red Sox fans.

Although a majority of the colonial population wore homespun clothing or items made from cheap textiles manufactured in *obrajes*, the well-to-do provided a market for European and East Asian textiles that thousands of tailors and seamstresses turned into more stylish clothing. In 1788 the tailors' guild in Mexico

City had over 1,200 members. Seamstresses, who made women's clothes, were undoubtedly as numerous, although they were paid less than their male counterparts. Buttonhole makers numbered eighty-nine. Nearly 200 hatters and even more shoemakers were present, while over 800 barbers and 200 hairdressers plied their trades.

Many visitors to colonial Latin America commented on the luxuriousness of dress exhibited by all classes. A British officer who traveled to Lima in the 1720s reported, "Of all the parts of the world, the people here are the most expensive in their habit." A French visitor reiterated the point, stating that Lima's women had "an insatiable appetite for pearls and jewels, for bracelets, earrings and other paraphernalia, which saps the wealth of husbands and lovers."²

The widespread passion for lavish dress established rich textiles as the most important single import throughout the colonial era. The Crown allowed native leaders and nobles to differentiate themselves from commoners by wearing more luxurious fabrics and styles but sought to prevent them from imitating Spanish fashions too closely. Colonial authorities made a greater effort to restrict the clothing for *castas* and blacks. In the mid-seventeenth century, the Viceroy of Peru and *Audiencia* of Lima ordered that "no mulatto woman, nor Negro woman, free or slave, wear woolen cloth, nor any cloth of silk, nor lace of gold, silver, black or white" under pain of confiscation of the offensive clothing, one hundred lashes, or exile.³ Such "sumptuary legislation" proved ineffective. Travelers in mid-eighteenth-century Lima noted that "the lower classes of women, even to the very Negroes . . . [seek] to imitate their betters, not only in the fashion of their dress, but also in the richness of it."⁴

Diet

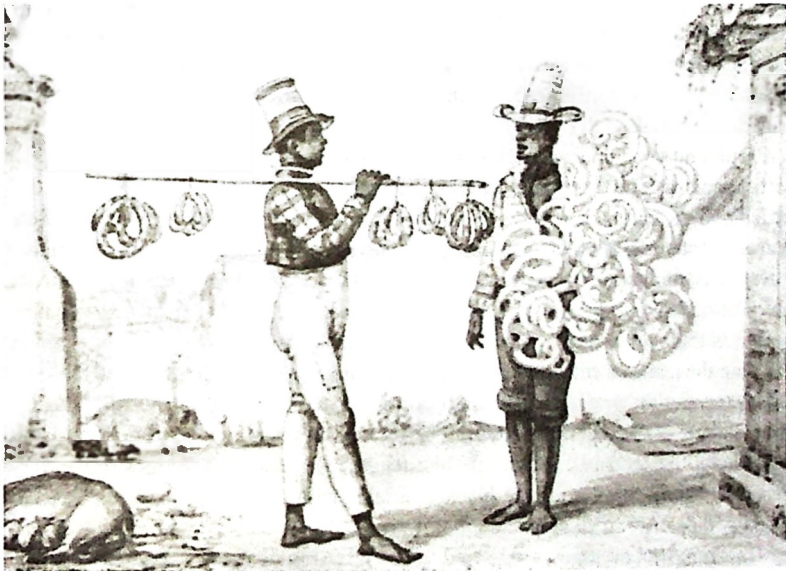
Culture, personal taste, habit, availability, and price determined the composition of individual diet. European plants and animals quickly came to supplement indigenous staples such as maize, beans, squash, and chilies in Mesoamerica; potatoes and quinoa in the Andes; and manioc in the Caribbean zone and Brazil. Europeans, Indians, and Africans altered their diets and tastes to incorporate previously unknown or expensive foods and obtained more variety and protein as a result. Regional products, moreover, gave Latin American meals a flavor distinct from the fare found on Iberian tables.

Maize remained the dietary staple of the indigenous population of Middle America after the conquest and was prominent in other regions as well. High in carbohydrates, maize kernels were often finely ground and grilled as tortillas, prepared in gruel, or steamed. However served, maize provided as much as 90 percent of the calories in an Indian's diet in the seventeenth century and still accounted for some three quarters in the mid-twentieth century. The rural *casta* population similarly depended on this vital dietary ingredient. Beans in their numerous forms also continued as a major source of protein, and squash, pumpkins, and gourds provided calories and protein. Whether consumed raw or in sauces, chili peppers and tomatoes added vitamins and flavor.

The meat of domesticated European animals supplemented a diet that remained based on preconquest plants. Chickens, pigs, sheep, and cattle thrived in the New World and offered an unprecedented amount of protein. Indians prized eggs, and chickens soon became intrusive residents in most villages. Pork and mutton also won favor. Beef, in contrast, gained comparable popularity more slowly, initially perhaps because the Indians associated cattle with the destruction of their crops. By the eighteenth century, however, beef was a common dietary item in northern New Spain and in most of Brazil and the Río de la Plata.

Africa also contributed to the evolving diet of the Iberian colonies. Bananas, kidney beans, and okra followed in the wake of the slave trade. Although the slaves' diet was generally inadequate in calories and nutrition, Africans sought to imitate the cuisine of their homelands whenever possible. The legacy of these traditions survives in the food preferences of modern Cuba and especially Brazil.

The diet of Europeans differed from that eaten by the majority of the population. Not only did Europeans and their creole descendants normally consume their meals at tables, which were absent in most native houses and in the homes of many *castas*, but they also sought to eat the kinds of food standard in Iberia. This dietary loyalty helps explain the continued significance of wine and olive oil in imports by the colonies long after settlement. Urban markets and retailers generally sold



Food was commonly sold in the streets and open-air public markets of colonial cities. The figure on the left carries sausages while the figure on the right carries intestines cleaned and ready to be stuffed with pork.

imported foodstuffs as well as local and regional products. As income increased, family diets diversified and improved.

Wheat baked into bread was the principal dietary ingredient of Europeans and their creole cousins. The more affluent households consumed only white bread and considered dark bread a poor person's food. A prosperous male consumed at least two pounds of bread, four ounces of meat, some vegetables, and oil or fat each day, but some variety was possible. Even country stores in Mexican mining towns in the first half of the seventeenth century stocked a diverse mix of foods for those who could afford them. Shrimp, oysters, honey, lentils, spices, bananas, vinegar, salt, sugar, chocolate, beans, cheese, garlic, molasses, lard, and figs appeared on shelves far from Mexico City.

Unlike the indigenous population, Europeans and other advantaged groups acquired most of their protein from meat. Mutton and pork were favorites in the Spanish colonies, but beef was also commonly consumed where it was affordable. Lard was used extensively in cooking, a custom begun before domestic olive oil was available in the Indies. Proximity to the sea enabled residents in Peru, New Granada, and the Caribbean Basin, for example, to have fresh fish in their diet instead of the salted cod common in Europe.

In Brazil, Mexico, the Río de la Plata region, Chile, and Venezuela, the proliferation of European livestock, particularly cattle, made beef a cheap and abundant part of the diet. By the early eighteenth century, slaves in Brazil received small amounts of dried beef from the pampas region and *sertão*, or fresh beef, from nearby ranches of the interior. Most Brazilian planters reduced the cost of feeding their slaves by allowing them to cultivate garden plots. Some produced enough to sell the surplus to other slaves or in local markets. The very poor—beggars and prisoners—seldom consumed protein and relied almost entirely on the nutrients provided in bread.

Fruit and vegetables supplemented the bread and meat in the European diet. Both Spaniards and Portuguese planted gardens and fruit trees wherever they settled and the climate and terrain allowed. Travelers marveled at the variety and quantity of items available: figs, grapes, pomegranates, oranges, lemons, bananas, other fruits, and green salads graced the tables in Mexico City. Even in inhospitable Potosí, high in the Andes, fruits of many kinds imported from lower valleys were available year-round in the markets.

As a dessert or a snack, sweets were extremely popular throughout the colonies. A traveler in Mexico City in 1625 noted their abundance with astonishment. The residents of Cartagena considered eating a sweet indispensable before drinking a glass of water. In Lima the inhabitants ate sweetmeats only as a dessert and then only rarely. Slave and free black women produced and sold these sugared sweets and pastries in all of Brazil's major cities.

The mix of beverages consumed in Latin America reflected both Iberian and indigenous customs. By the eighteenth century, cacao or chocolate was the most popular nonalcoholic beverage in much of Spanish America. Before the Spaniards arrived, consumption was limited primarily to nobles and warriors in



The most commonly consumed alcoholic beverage in colonial Mexico was pulque, the fermented product made from the sap of the maguey plant. In this print a peasant draws the sap from the plant.

Middle America. Consumption then spread to the region's general native population after the conquest. Europeans changed the Indians' recipes that included water, maize flour, and chili, however, sweetening the beverage with vanilla, cinnamon, and sugar. With Guayaquil and Venezuela joining Central America as major centers of cacao production in the early seventeenth century, the market continued to expand. In South America, *yerba mate*, or Paraguayan herbal tea, was also extremely popular, particularly among the creoles. In Quito, Lima, the south of Brazil, and numerous other locations, many persons drank *yerba* in both the morning and the evening.

Alcoholic beverages frequently complemented meals and were imbibed liberally at other times as well. Spaniards brought a taste for wine from Iberia and imported the beverage in large quantities. Domestic production followed settlement quickly where the climate and soil were appropriate. Wine produced in Peru and, by the late seventeenth century, Mendoza helped supply the needs of Upper Peru

and Buenos Aires. Imports from Spain and Peru stocked the markets in Mexico and Central America in the absence of a significant regional viticulture and despite prohibitions against interregional trade. By the mid-eighteenth century, Lima's inhabitants enjoyed regional wines from Pisco, Lucumba, and Chile.

Brandy, the distilled, high-alcohol-content cousin of wine, emerged as the beverage of choice in the late seventeenth century because of its greater potency and superior traveling characteristics. Originally used medicinally, the drink's popularity burgeoned, and imports from Spain increased accordingly. New Spain, Cuba, and Venezuela provided the major markets for Peruvian brandy after about 1700. By 1717 the Spanish miners in Peru drank it in preference to wine, which they left to the lower classes. Indeed, brandy ultimately became the poor man's luxury among urban laborers, cowboys, and even slaves.

Whereas well-to-do Spaniards drank good wine and brandy, most of society imbibed less pretentious intoxicants. These included *chicha*, a beer made from corn, in the Andes; *pulque*, derived from the maguey or century plant, in Mexico; and *aguardiente de caña*, a potent, distilled sugarcane-based beverage produced in Brazil, Paraguay, the Caribbean Islands, New Granada, and other locations where cane grew. On some Brazilian plantations slaves received a morning rum ration before heading to the fields. After the conquest in central Mexico, alcohol consumption increased as commoners escaped traditional taboos regarding *pulque* and obtained access to imported Spanish wines. Indians there considered drinking to stupefaction acceptable behavior in ritual situations. Among the Andean peoples as well, drinking alcohol was an expected part of ritual observance. In one annual celebration, the Mamaq of the Rimac River valley danced and drank for five consecutive nights. Colonial authorities condemned such behavior, but some Spaniards profited from the sale of intoxicants to natives, and ultimately the Crown taxed the beverages. Heavy consumption of alcohol, in short, was a common feature of colonial society, as it was in the preindustrial societies of Europe.

Tobacco and Coca

Tobacco, an appetite suppressant originally used by natives for ritual purposes, was widely consumed in the colonial era as a complement to food and the consumption of alcohol. It caught the attention of Europeans starting in 1492. A pamphlet published by a physician in 1565 in Seville optimistically extolled its virtues as a cure for virtually all ailments suffered by humans and animals alike. Over time, smoking rolled tobacco became commonplace, and eighteenth-century observers commented that men and women of all races and every economic status enjoyed cigarettes and cigars. Consumption of legally produced cigarettes in New Spain in 1806 averaged more than two daily per inhabitant. While far fewer cigars were smoked, and snuff enjoyed even less popularity, the habit of chewing tobacco was widespread among the poor. In Lima, at least, women used slender rolls of tobacco to clean their teeth, a process that involved chewing the end of the roll and then rubbing the teeth with the masticated leaves. As a result, the production of tobacco products became one of the largest manufacturing enterprises in the colonies by the eighteenth century.

Like tobacco, coca was cultivated in the Andes for centuries prior to the Spaniards' arrival, providing leaves that when chewed suppressed appetite. While the Inka nobility had enjoyed the privilege of chewing the leaves accompanied by a little ash, widespread use among the broader populace occurred when Spaniards expanded cultivation and commercialized the product. In 1678 Potosí's leading merchant purchased roughly 300,000 pounds of leaves. In the late eighteenth century, coca was a close second to brandy as the most valuable South American product sold in Potosí. The popularity of chewing coca in the Andes has continued to the present day, while its high-intensity cousin cocaine, developed in the modern era, has become a worldwide scourge.

Illness and Medicine

Even as Latin America's population grew in the seventeenth century, poor sanitation, inadequate water supplies, and a general absence of sound hygiene continued to promote disease and poor health. The streets of large cities were running sewers filled with human and animal excrement. Slaughterhouses discarded their waste where dogs and other scavengers could drag it near habitations. The fact that city councils of Buenos Aires and other towns had to repeatedly post prohibitions against leaving the bodies of dead slaves and livestock carcasses in the streets suggests both the absence of human empathy and even rudimentary hygiene. Few colonial residents had reliable access to potable water. Although aqueducts were constructed in some of the larger cities to bring water from the countryside, most residents bought water from peddlers or relied on easily contaminated rainwater collected in ceramic or wooden tubs. Poor personal hygiene compounded the dangers inherent in these conditions. Few people bathed regularly; soap and clean clothes were luxuries limited to the more affluent groups in colonial society.

Spanish physicians first reached the New World on Columbus's second voyage, and some later followed conquistadors to the mainland. Despite local and royal efforts to license medical practitioners, charlatans with fraudulent credentials were common throughout the colonial period. Formally approved university-trained physicians were the elite of the medical profession, but very few students matriculated in this unattractive career. Surgeons' status fell far below that of physicians. Often associated with barbering and bloodletting, they seldom bothered to get official approval to practice. Most had no university training; rather, they apprenticed with an "approved" surgeon for four or five years. Tightened standards and more formalized instruction awaited the late eighteenth century.

Phlebotomists, or bleeders, ranked at the bottom of officially recognized medical practitioners. Apprenticeships of three or four years replaced any academic work. Oral examinations, moreover, meant that phlebotomists could be illiterate. Examiners expected them to know only about veins and arteries and how to put on leeches and cupping glasses, to open ulcers and boils, and to extract teeth. Outside the major colonial cities, barbers usually provided these services. In small towns without guilds, no effective controls regulated the training and practice of these men, with malpractice and abuse the predictable results.



In this eighteenth-century print the Virgin of Guadalupe is thanked by Mexico City's population for her protection during an epidemic.

Unlike all other medical practice, delivering babies was almost exclusively a female profession, although wealthy women in larger cities often sought assistance from a licensed surgeon as well. Few midwives were formally trained or approved, and most relied more on superstition than anatomical knowledge. The deadly



An itinerant tooth-puller practices his trade in the street

combination of frequent pregnancies and poor medical practice made complications in childbirth a common cause of death for colonial women. As in Europe at the same time, even physicians regularly recommended treatments that endangered both mother and child. The respected Mexican physician Juan Manuel Venegas, for example, advised the following procedure for expelling a dead infant from the womb: application of an enema made from “a chicken cut open down the back, a mule’s sweatpad cooked in urine, and infusions of feathergrass and leaves of senna,” followed by a “drink of horse manure dissolved in wine.”⁵

Limited opportunities for formal medical instruction and the low status of medical practitioners meant a constant scarcity of physicians. The universities in Mexico, Lima, and Guatemala together probably conferred fewer than 1,000 medical degrees. Graduates, moreover, established their practices in urban centers where the Spanish populations were eager for their services. Rural villages rarely if ever had a physician. Because Brazil lacked a university, all its Portuguese physicians were immigrants or colonials trained in Europe.

The small number of legally qualified physicians opened the way for quacks and male and female healers who diagnosed illnesses, bled victims, and prescribed remedies for the majority of the colonial population. These "curers" (*curanderos*) lacked any formal medical training, although some had observed physicians while working as hospital attendants. In regions with large populations of African slaves, native remedies that combined the bark, roots, and leaves of plants with spiritualist practices were frequently employed, even by the more affluent members of society.

Apothecaries' inventories contained oddities drawn from centuries of folk medicine and Galenism in Spain as well as items unique to the Indies. As in Europe, druggists sold products whose efficacy frequently rested more in the mind than the body: tapir's hoof, human cranium, llama fetuses, lizard excrement, spider webs, dried and powdered earthworms, gander droppings, pearls, amber, and garnet sat on pharmacy shelves along with rose-colored oil and honey, several varieties of animal grease, mercury, and bezoar stones secured from the stomachs of llama, vicuña, and other ruminant animals. Purgatives included balsam, snake-skin, cornmeal, and tobacco. It is small wonder that many people had a healthy skepticism about the efficacy of medical treatment.

Poverty and disease go hand in hand, for the conditions creating the first produce an environment conducive to the second. The poor experienced poverty, inadequate diet, hard labor, and unsanitary conditions at work and home, and, as a result, they also experienced ill health and low life expectancy. For most inhabitants in the colonial world, their short lives contained few pleasures and fewer rewards.

Crime and Punishment

Crime and violence accompanied Iberian settlement in the New World and remained permanent features of colonial daily life. Authorities tried to address cases of robbery, assault, and homicide, but few paid attention to violations of legislation intended to protect Indians and slaves from physical abuse and exploitation. Without a doubt, petty theft was the most common crime. Consumer fraud, particularly by bakers and other food vendors, was also a predictable and everyday occurrence. Nearly universally, propertied colonists sought to avoid the burdens of taxes and customs duties, most typically by offering bribes to underpaid officials. Because there were few full-time agents of law enforcement, most crime went undetected and unpunished. From the early years of the colonial period, cities hired night watchmen, but most were poor men with few resources or were disabled soldiers. In the eighteenth century, municipal authorities employed *alcaldes de barrio* (neighborhood magistrates) supported by a few armed assistants to enforce the law, but very few of these poorly compensated law enforcement agents were disposed to investigate crimes or arrest criminals. Yet, despite the absence of a professional police force, some criminals were identified, tried, and sentenced for their crimes. Their public punishment, including executions and whippings, reliably drew large crowds for these grisly entertainments.

Law enforcement had a distinct character in the countryside. Within rural Indian villages, local leaders dealt with cases of robbery, adultery, and rape. On

the plantations and large ranches of Brazil and the Spanish colonies, landowners or their agents exercised *de facto* judicial authority, usually administering corporal punishment. The death penalty, however, remained a prerogative of the state. Homicide, sedition, and aggravated assault required the intervention of the colonial judiciary, but these cases represented comparatively rare violations of the law. Thieves found urban centers irresistible, with their unlit streets and insufficient night patrols. The concentration of cash, jewels, and other movable property, coupled with the desperate living conditions of the urban poor, meant that neither the wealthy nor the impoverished were immune from theft. For example, in 1630, burglars entered the residence of Lima merchant Benito de Orozco while he and his wife were sleeping. The intruders threatened him with a sword and dagger, stole his jewels, and made off with his clothing.

Assault with a deadly weapon, often a household knife or tool, was a commonplace among men whose fighting spirit was fortified with alcohol. Armed assaults were so frequent in rural areas of Argentina and Uruguay that shopkeepers sought protection by separating themselves and their merchandise from their customers with iron or sturdy wooden bars. Both assailants and victims were almost always young males, and victims were often their family members, neighbors, or fellow workers. The deadly combination of primitive medical practices and few doctors increased the likelihood that wounded victims would die. A diarist in Lima recorded nearly sixty murders and deaths resulting from assault from 1630 to 1635. On one of many occasions involving passion, an irate husband stabbed both his wife and his parish priest when he discovered them *in flagrante delicto*.

Civil authorities intended that public punishments would serve an exemplary purpose, reminding the populace that robbery, violent acts, and other crimes brought severe retribution. Judges routinely punished convicted criminals with terms of hard labor in *obrajes*, port facilities, the galleys, or military service. In 1634, for example, eleven Indians were publicly whipped in Lima as *ladrones famosos*, or "renowned thieves." On some occasions, judges combined public whippings with sentences of forced servitude, but whippings, especially of slaves, were a commonplace across the colonies. The use of the whip had a discriminatory, racial character; unlike the rest of society, Spaniards were spared this terrible corporal punishment.

Executions were less frequent in the Spanish colonies and Brazil than in the English colonies. This difference arose both from the Iberian legal systems' receptivity to pleas of extenuating circumstances and from an appreciation that dead offenders could provide no labor. There were regional differences within the colonies. In early seventeenth-century Peru, executions were frequent in cases of murder, attempted murder, robbery, and sodomy. More than forty executions occurred in Lima in the early 1630s, for example. In late eighteenth-century Mexico, in contrast, judges rarely ordered execution even for a convicted murderer.

Executions attracted sizable crowds. The burning in Callao of a *mestizo* and a *mulatto* convicted of sodomy drew a crowd of spectators from Lima. Even more spectacular was the execution of the Aragonese merchant Thomas Buesso,

convicted of sodomy and bestiality. An "infinite number of persons on foot, on horseback, and in coaches" gathered at 4 P.M. on November 13, 1630, to watch the authorities whip Buesso's black male lover and burn both the merchant and the unfortunate dog he had molested.

Entertainment

Daily life in colonial cities offered variety and excitement far removed from the routine of the countryside. Bells in churches and convents marked the hours and processions honoring religious holidays mixed with civic celebrations to add color, sound, and festive enjoyment. The concentrations of wealth in the largest cities enabled expenditures for public display and spectacles rarely possible elsewhere and beyond the imagination of villagers. Even the funerals of wealthy residents became public events due to the display of riches and almsgiving.

Bullfights typically took place in the central plaza after intersecting streets were closed for the event. The few dedicated arenas were an eighteenth-century innovation. Plazas were also the sites for jousting on horseback with cane spears, military parades, public *autos de fé*, the execution of criminals, religious and civil processions, and fiestas of all sorts. Whenever these events attracted crowds, vendors hawked fruit, sweetmeats, beverages, ices, and other tasty items.

These public festivals provided entertainment for rich and poor alike. While every municipality, parish, guild, and brotherhood honored the day of its patron saint, large cities hosted the most frequent and lavish fiestas. Mexico City annually celebrated more than ninety festivals in the late seventeenth century. A new viceroy's entrance into the city or the oath to a new monarch occasioned elaborate festivities. The capital's city council lavished special attention on viceregal entrances, substantially overspending its normal annual budget. These sumptuous events included parades featuring elaborately decorated floats depicting historical events, native dancers and musicians, bullfights, fireworks that went on for hours, a huge triumphal arch nearly four stories high, mock jousts, and military demonstrations. An extravagant viceregal reception in Lima in 1648 was celebrated by paving the area beneath the triumphal arch with 300 bars of silver. In 1621 the festival for the oath to King Philip IV in Mexico City offered not only elaborate fireworks with monsters, snakes, dragons, and castles but also silver coins that members of the city council threw to the crowd following each pledge. Following their accession in 1700, the Bourbons, Spain's new ruling dynasty, deemphasized the viceregal entrance but enhanced the importance of the ceremony surrounding the oath to the monarch. Thus, when Mexico City celebrated Ferdinand VI's coronation in 1747, some 20,000 spectators could view more than ninety-five bullfights over ten days.

Viceregal entrances and oaths to the monarch were magnificent but infrequent festivities. The eight-day Corpus Christi celebration, in contrast, took place annually. Mexico City's festival featured plays performed outdoors to accommodate crowds of spectators as well as a procession that accompanied the Eucharist through the streets. In the late seventeenth century, government officials, clerics, religious brotherhoods, professors, students, civic groups, and artisan guilds

paraded with carefully constructed giants, big heads, small devils, a dragon, costumed dancers, special altars of silver, decorated carts, and floats. Corpus Christi commemorations thus brought together the populace of Mexico City as it presumed that all persons, regardless of birth, social position, or economic means, shared a common religion. Each celebration was organized as a script that expressed the official ideologies of Church and state. In Mexico City, Lima, and Salvador, Bahia, the presence of viceregal courts, archbishops, other prominent and powerful authorities, wealthy merchants, and landowners sustained an intense calendar of social activities. In Lima, for example, on New Year's Eve 1629, Viceroy Conde de Chinchón staged a theatrical presentation in the palace at 3 P.M.



Native, African, and European traditions contributed to the development of music, dance, and games in the colonies.

for the *audiencia* ministers and their wives. When an Augustinian friar secured a professorial chair at the University of San Marcos, his friends awakened the populace with trumpets and drums; great bell-ringing and fireworks continued the celebration the following night. The arrival of a new archbishop in early February prompted another round of celebrations, bell-ringing, and fireworks highlighted by a "splendid dinner" featuring sixty-four different dishes. On occasion, the viceroy, his wife, and a large retinue joined in the daily stroll around the plaza mayor and nearby streets. There affluent residents saw friends and displayed their finery.

Workers in all locales enjoyed the informal drinking, gambling, singing, and dancing that accompanied fiestas. Bullfights were extremely popular, and cockfights could attract hundreds of spectators. When only brief periods separated holidays—for example, Christmas, New Year, and Epiphany or Twelfth Night—workers in Chihuahua treated themselves to an extended two-week holiday rather than returning to work. Mineworkers and other laborers often extended their weekend entertainment by celebrating "Saint Monday," despite their employers' opposition.

Although public spaces were the centers of city life, families also entertained at home. The principal residential amusement for the elite was card playing, accompanied by gambling, an activity beloved by many Iberians. Participants included nearly anyone with pesos to lose, and some high-ranked officials turned their homes into virtual gaming parlors. Betting was also a passion among the lower classes, and few cantinas and *pulperías* did not offer the opportunity to play cards or dice or wager on games of skill. Here suspected cheating or unexpected losses often led to knife fights and brawls. Despite periodic royal and clerical efforts to ban them, cockfights provided a venue for diversion and public gambling for rich and poor alike throughout the Americas.

Death and Dying

The colonial era opened with deadly cycles of epidemic diseases. Even after native populations adapted to the new disease environment and began to recover their numbers in the seventeenth century, mortality rates remained high, as they were in Iberia and elsewhere at that time. Childbirth took a heavy toll on women, and infant death was predictably common. Urban places were particularly deadly. Primitive sewage disposal resulted in human waste mixing with that of livestock and other animals on city streets. Medical care was unaffordable for the poor and, in most cases, actually increased the risk of death for those who could afford it. In an era before modern sanitation, workplace safety regulations, and antibiotics, early death was commonplace.

Whenever possible, Catholic clerics administered last rites to dying parishioners and then conducted funeral services. Proper Christian burial included a procession to the grave accompanied by a cleric, relatives, friends, and members of a confraternity, if the departed belonged to one. For those who could afford it, masses for the dead were celebrated on the anniversary of the burial for as long as the family could pay the priest's fees. For the rich, increasingly elaborate cortèges

The document also designated a burial site, stated the testator's desire for eternal life, and provided for one or more cycles of posthumous masses to speed the soul's journey through purgatory and into heaven. When financially possible, and on occasion even when financially inadvisable, the testator established endowments to provide for masses said in perpetuity, often by a male relative. The practice of leaving the Church part of one's estate, or even all of it in the absence of familial heirs, was sufficiently common that the Crown prescribed conditions under which such a bequest could be made. Nonetheless, over time the resulting transfer of land and income to the Church was enormous.

THE CULTURAL MILIEU

Colonialism subordinated indigenous and later creole cultures to European cultural hegemony. Undergirded by Catholicism, cultural colonialism proved to be more durable and resistant to American efforts to establish an independent cultural identity than did the more visible political and economic structures it helped sustain.

The cultural milieu varied according to the intensity of each region's contact with the European metropole, its wealth, and the composition of the local society. Elites in major administrative centers, like Lima, tried to replicate Iberian cultural institutions and practices. The movement of officials, churchmen, merchants, and others to and from the colony and metropolis resulted in an ongoing transfer of Iberian high culture—European books and ideas, music, architecture, and art—to the major colonial cities. In poorer and geographically isolated colonial towns and rural areas, the limited high culture available revolved around religious instruction and celebrations. Wherever there were large indigenous populations or numerous African slaves, the inhabitants drew on non-European traditions and modified Iberian cultural expression into a unique popular culture. Bahia in Brazil was deeply connected to the African cultures where so many of the region's slaves were born. Similarly, in rural Peru indigenous peoples maintained the language traditions and forms of material culture that existed prior to the arrival of Pizarro.

Origins of a Colonial Culture

In any clash between literate and preliterate societies, historical understanding, the past itself, becomes the possession of the literate culture. In the case of Latin America, the creation of colonial societies through conquest and settlement was seen through the lens of European chronicles and histories. Written from the victors' perspective, these accounts enshrined a concept of European cultural superiority that persisted long after the colonies became politically independent.

The origins of this culture began with the chronicles and histories written soon after the discovery of the Americas. In letters, reports, and logs filled with inaccurate European and biblical references, Columbus made the first attempt to recast American realities according to European intellectual categories. The creation of this mythical New World coincided with the conquest and settlement of the real America. Bernal Díaz del Castillo, for example, identified the great cities

of Mesoamerica with places mentioned in the popular romance *Amadis of Gaul*. Not only the reports of Cabeza de Vaca but also the mythological flight of seven Portuguese bishops from the invading Muslims stimulated Coronado's search for the "Seven Cities of Cibola."

The conquistadors were rough and generally unlettered men who wrote few works of lasting historical or literary value. A major exception was the foot soldier Bernal Díaz. His *True History of the Conquest of Mexico*, a highly personal and readable narrative of the epic event, has been translated into English, German, French, and Hungarian and still finds many readers. Cortés's *Letters from Mexico* demonstrates his high intelligence and curiosity and provides an unequaled glimpse into the great leader's mind. Nicolaus Federmann, one of the Welsers' captains in Venezuela, and Pedro de Valdivia, the conqueror of Chile, also left similar, although lesser-known, chronicles of their exploits. A number of the participants in the conquest of Peru later also wrote about their experiences. The most important early chroniclers of Brazil were Pêro de Magalhães de Gândavo, the Jesuit Fernão Cardim, and Gabriel Soares de Sousa.

Missionaries were eager to discover and understand the languages, customs, and histories of the indigenous peoples. Although the results of their findings were uneven in quality and even the most important of their works found an extremely limited contemporary audience, many scholars still consult them. The writings of the Jesuits Manoel de Nobrega and José de Anchieta remain particularly valuable sources for Brazilian history. By 1572, at least 109 books to aid evangelization had been written in New Spain alone, most of them by Franciscans. Far from being pedantic scholarship, these and many similar works were intended to facilitate the process of conversion and cultural change.

The early churchmen also wrote a number of historical and ethnographic works, which were often marked by a genuine sympathy for the indigenous peoples as well as thoroughness and intellectual rigor. The Dominican Bartolomé de las Casas, bishop of Chiapas, exemplified this close identification with the plight of the conquered peoples. In numerous writings he portrayed the Indians as innocent victims of Spanish cruelty. The Franciscan Fray Toribio de Benavente, known as Motolinía, wrote an extremely informative *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*. Other Franciscans of the first generation—friars Andrés de Olmos, Martín de la Coruña, and Francisco de las Navas—also wrote important ethnographic writings that later writers used with or without appropriate attribution. Fellow Franciscan Fray Bernardino de Sahagún put the learning of a lifetime of missionary work and study in Mexico in his monumental *Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva España*. Unfortunately, Philip II ordered the manuscript confiscated in 1577 as part of a general prohibition against published descriptions of native customs and superstitions. This effort to prevent the subversive effect such knowledge might have on Christian doctrine meant that Sahagún's *Historia General*, Motolinía's earlier completed *Historia*, and numerous other valuable ethnographic works were not published until centuries later. Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's depiction of Inka and colonial life in Peru was not printed until the twentieth century.



By the eighteenth century Cuzco, Peru boasted a large number of skilled painters, the majority Indians or *mestizos*, who produced religious art. This portrait represents the Archangel Uriel armed with an arquebus.

Education

Iberian settlers naturally wanted to raise their children in the religious and intellectual traditions of Europe. To avoid the high cost and danger of transatlantic travel, colonists established schools, seminaries, and universities in the New World. After the conversion of the native peoples, the Church achieved its greatest success in founding institutions that protected and transmitted the intellectual authority of Europe through education. By the end of the sixteenth century, most of the religious orders had shifted their scarce educational resources from the native nobility to meeting the needs of boys and young men from the Spanish and creole elites. The Jesuits, in particular, were successful in attracting to their *colegios* the sons of well-placed colonial families. They founded the first of ten *colegios* and four seminaries in Brazil in 1556; their first *colegio*, San Pablo, in Lima in 1568; and *colegios* in Mexico beginning in 1574.

Colegios offered courses in humanities, philosophy, theology, and languages. The school day was long, as students started at 7:45 A.M. and took courses and participated in mandatory religious services until after 5 P.M. By the early seventeenth century, San Pablo had 500 students, and from the 1660s to the 1760s, it had over 1,000 students.

In the Spanish colonies, settlers, ecclesiastics, and civil authorities pushed from an early date for the creation of universities. In 1551 the Crown authorized the founding of universities in Mexico City and Lima modeled on Spain's great University of Salamanca. Universities proliferated and by the end of the colonial period, well over twenty institutions had conferred nearly 150,000 university degrees. Only the ten "major" universities offered doctorates in the five faculties: arts, theology, law, canon law, and medicine. Until the late eighteenth century, Aristotelian logic, metaphysics, and physics dominated the three-year arts curriculum.

In contrast with Spanish America, no university was founded in colonial Brazil. Portugal had a well-established educational system, and so Brazil's most important thinkers and writers graduated from its prestigious University of Coimbra. Jesuits in Bahia, for example, educated the seventeenth-century Brazilian poet Gregorio de Matos before he studied at Coimbra, where he received a doctorate in law. One reason for the absence of a university in Brazil was the relative weakness of the Church. With only three bishoprics established by 1700, the potential patronage for learning and the opportunities for university graduates were limited.

At first, professorial appointments were based on the results of open competitions judged by the university's governing body, students, and alumni on the faculty. Cronyism and aspirants catering to students' taste, however, soon corrupted the system. As a result, students had lost their vote in the selection process by the late seventeenth century. Salaries were usually quite low and remained unchanged throughout the colonial era, a condition that ultimately encouraged incumbents to hold additional employment. An academic chair, however, was both prestigious and a useful stepping stone for ecclesiastical and secular preferment.

Student bodies were composed solely of males, most from ambitious middle-class and well-to-do Spanish families in the capitals and provincial cities. By law

the Indians, particularly nobles, were permitted entry into universities, but few attended. The racially mixed children of wealthy or well-connected Spaniards had little trouble overcoming the racial proscriptions designed to exclude all persons with "tainted blood." Blacks and *mulatos* had the greatest difficulty entering universities. They repeatedly met prejudice and protest and found it difficult to receive degrees even after completing the required coursework and examinations.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the general intellectual level in the colonial universities, as in Castile, was very low. Professors often did not attend class or, when they did lecture, performed perfunctorily. In some cases, they actually knew nothing about the subjects they were supposed to be teaching. The worst abuses in Mexico were associated with the chairs in Indian languages. In part the corruption of colonial universities was the natural result of the selfish vocationalism that drove ambitious youths to seek degrees, particularly in civil and canon law, required for some of the most desirable and powerful positions in the Church and state.

Books and Printing

From the earliest days of colonization, Iberian explorers, conquistadors, and settlers arrived with books. Light reading—for example, romances of chivalry—found room in at least a few conquerors' luggage. Clerics imported religious works that included breviaries, Bibles, and missals. Despite routine examination by the inquisitors of Seville and the colonial inquisitions, prohibited literature also could be found in many libraries.

Although the small literate population of Spanish America continued to import a wide variety of books from Spain, the introduction of printing presses in the colonies enabled the publication of New World editions of Old World classics and also offered local authors an opportunity to see their prose and verse set for posterity. The first press in Mexico began publishing in the mid-1530s; its oldest extant book, a catechism in Spanish and Nahuatl, dates from 1539. By 1600, 300 books had been published in the viceregal capital; a century later the number exceeded 2,300. Printing presses began functioning in Lima in 1583, Puebla in 1640, and Guatemala during the following year. In the eighteenth century, another fourteen cities boasted presses. Never allowed to compete seriously with Spanish publishers, the New World presses initially focused on works for evangelization and subsequently published a broader range of works, which included books on history, geography, law, medicine, and other fields. Numerous, and at times short-lived, newspapers appeared in the late eighteenth century.

Publications in Spanish America were overwhelmingly religious in subject. Churchmen, the most avid devotees of literature, published numerous sermons, theological studies, and works to assist evangelization, as well as biographies of outstanding clerics. Sermons were usually printed through the largesse of a benefactor interested in advancing the career or satisfying the ego of a particular cleric. By the mid-seventeenth century some sermons contained a strong element of creole self-consciousness. In New Spain this was particularly evident in works devoted to the Virgin of Guadalupe.

The audience for both colonial publications and imported books was extremely small. Probably no more than 10 percent of the colonial population was ever functionally literate—that is, actually used reading and writing skills. The active intellectual community was much smaller, probably never more than a few thousand at any one time. In the late seventeenth century, a few hundred individuals at most in Mexico City participated in its intellectual life and were aware of the major controversies and new ideas that were stimulating the European intellectual community.

In contrast with Spanish America, no printing press was available in Brazil until 1808. As a result, Brazilian authors sent their works to Lisbon for publication. Without a printing press, the dissemination of ideas and the essential connection of writer and audience were nearly impossible. Without universities and their libraries, the concentrated intellectual energies of faculty and students, and the fiscal resources that they brought together, Brazil lacked the critical mass necessary to promote creative activity at the level found in the great cities of Spanish America. Although literary production was limited, the major themes and styles noted in Spanish America were nonetheless present.

Colonial Intellectuals

Despite the problems of isolation, censorship, and limited audience, Spanish America produced a number of significant intellectuals, although few of the first rank. This failure—if failure it was—resulted from the heavy weight of the colonial situation itself. The work of colonial intellectuals was necessarily derivative, imitating European style and theme. Originality was instead demonstrated in the evocation of the American landscape or the celebration of American heroes.

A number of works celebrated the heroic era of colonial history, such as *La Araucana* (1569), the epic poem by Alonso de Ercilla, and *Comentarios Reales de Los Incas* (1609), by the Peruvian *mestizo* Garcilaso de la Vega. The American themes of *La Araucana* and *Comentarios* represented what became a general pattern of increased creole self-confidence and self-consciousness in the Spanish colonies.

The outstanding seventeenth-century literary figure in Brazil was the Jesuit Antonio Vieira. Born in Lisbon in 1608, Father Vieira emigrated to Brazil at the age of six and was educated at the Jesuit *colegio* in Salvador, Bahia. There he fought hard in the Jesuits' efforts to improve the condition of Brazil's native peoples, and when he returned to Portugal to pursue this battle, his prose became well known in Europe.

The Baroque period, roughly the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in Latin America, was marked by great technical skill, exuberance in decoration, and a concern for the fabulous and supernatural. Entries in poetry tournaments, popular from the late sixteenth century, frequently demonstrated a Baroque spirit. This period also was characterized by a growing interest in nature, an interest pursued increasingly through rational inquiry and measurement. In the next century, this marginal intellectual direction gained in prestige, through the reflected glories of the European Enlightenment. Yet the triumph of rationalism and scientific method was never complete in Latin America.

The inherent tension between the competing claims of reason and religion that was typical of the Baroque can be detected in the lives of two of colonial Spanish America's greatest intellectuals. Pedro de Peralta y Barnuevo, eventually the rector of the University of San Marcos in Lima, was an early eighteenth-century mathematician and cosmographer known to contemporaries as a "monster of erudition." He also devoted himself to practical projects, such as supervising the city's fortifications. Yet toward the end of his life Peralta expressed disillusion with learning and worldly concerns. His last great work, *Passion and Triumph of Christ*, was an archetypal Baroque expression of religious enthusiasm that alleged that knowledge of God is not subject to rational inquiry.

The Mexican creole Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora was an even more remarkable individual. His father had been tutor to a son of Philip IV, and his mother, also a Spanish immigrant, was related to the poet Luis de Góngora. Sigüenza entered the Society of Jesus as a youth in 1662 but was expelled for a breach of discipline. Although he later became a priest, his efforts to gain readmission to the Society failed. Turning to an academic career, he secured the chair of mathematics and astrology at the University of Mexico in 1672 at the age of twenty-five.

Sigüenza's achievements can be grouped into two broad categories: (1) archaeology and history and (2) mathematics and applied sciences. He learned Indian languages and collected artifacts and manuscripts. Most of his research on the indigenous civilizations of Mesoamerica was either not published or failed to survive, but he demonstrably examined topics as diverse as the ancient calendar and the genealogy of the Aztec royal house. He also wrote histories of the University of Mexico and the city cathedral. Although not a theoretical mathematician, Sigüenza made a well-recognized contribution to engineering projects and to astronomy. He owned a telescope with four lenses and labored tirelessly to measure the movement of heavenly bodies.

Sigüenza's final testament, like his life, left unresolved the contest between reason and superstition. He requested that surgeons examine his mortal remains to discover the cause of his painful death, leaving explicit suggestions as to which organs might hold the key. At the same time, he noted that he owned a hat worn by Francisco de Aguiar y Seijas, a deceased friend and the former archbishop of Mexico. Because some sick people had experienced relief from their ailments when they touched the hat, Sigüenza requested that it be placed in a church where the sick could continue to seek its miraculous powers.

The most remarkable colonial intellectual of the Baroque was the Mexican nun Sister Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651-95). An illegitimate child from a modest provincial family, the precocious and beautiful young woman attracted the attention and patronage of the viceroy's wife. Despite these advantages, she entered a Carmelite convent at age fifteen. Unhappy with this order's strict discipline, she left it for a Jeronimita convent, where she remained until her death.

Unlike most of the colonial period's literature, Sister Juana's poetry still finds an audience today, and her life was the subject of a movie. The durability of her poetry results from her mastery of the lyric form and the emotion and intelligence



Portrait of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz used as frontispiece in a biography published in 1700.

that it communicates. Unlike many of her contemporaries, Sister Juana escaped the deadening habit of mere verbal cleverness and decoration. Her best verse illuminates the inherent tension and conflict between the claims of reason and emotion and the claims of science and revelation:

My soul is confusedly divided into two parts,
 One a slave to passion, the other
 measured by reason.
 Inflamed civil war importunately
 afflicts my bosom. Each part

strives to prevail, and amidst
 such varied storms, both contenders
 will perish, and neither one will triumph.⁶

Sister Juana was also aware of the unequal and unfair burdens she carried because of her sex. Indeed, some of her critics viewed her passion for knowledge and willingness to question as rebellious and unfeminine. Given her personal history, her questioning of society's double standard was particularly powerful:

Which has the greater sin when burned
 by the same lawless fever:
 She who is amorously deceived,
 or he, the sly deceiver?⁷

As her fame increased and her work, much of it secular, found publication and an audience in the Old World as well as the New, Sister Juana was criticized by some religious authorities: Members of her order, her confessor, and the hierarchy, including the bishop of Puebla, revealed their displeasure. In 1693, after going through a period of self-doubt and unhappiness, she finally gave up her unequal struggle with the representatives of conservative opinion in the Church. She renounced her worldly possessions, including her beloved library and mathematical and musical instruments, signing what was in effect a surrender in her own blood: "I, Sister Juana Inés de la Cruz, the worst in the world." Turning to a harsh discipline of fasting and mortification of the flesh, her health declined rapidly, and she died in 1695.

Popular Culture

Most of colonial society experienced cultural life in forms different from those enjoyed by the more affluent literate population. The statutory and material subordination of the colonial masses resulted naturally in the devaluation of the artistic and intellectual values that survived from the indigenous or African cultures or were created along with an evolving creole folk culture. Yet, despite the elite's prejudice and the limited resources, elements of these minority cultural traditions contributed in important ways to the artistic and literary development of Latin America.

Because the masses were denied access to a formal education, the popular culture escaped some of the inhibitions found in the works of the great creole intellectuals. Illiteracy and, in many cases, cultural distinctiveness permitted a cultural independence and exuberance denied to the completely Hispanicized and educated minority. As a result, dance, music, theater, and, to a lesser extent, literature in Latin America eventually carried the thematic, rhythmic, and mythological imprint of the popular culture.

Because the culture of Christian Spain was officially that of the colonies, the popular culture developed by expropriating some of the forms and symbols sanctioned by Church and state. The people created a tradition that celebrated their values and needs by insinuation rather than conflict. The forms most susceptible to this process were

dance, religious theater, music, and the *máscara* or *mascarada*. The *máscara* was a parade of costumed men and women, sometimes associated with a theme. Over time, these various forms of expression developed rules of style and theme, one being a tendency to lampoon the pretensions and conceits of the metropolitan culture.

One *máscara* in Puebla, New Spain's second city, included a float on which effigies of the viceroy and his wife were physically abused by the fiesta-goers. Lesser public officials and even religious leaders were often subjected to similar symbolic humiliations. It was also common for social conventions to be stood on their head by humble participants. For example, celebrants often dressed as members of the opposite sex during these celebrations. Even within the more constrained confines of religious processions and plays, the people found opportunities to express their cultural distinctiveness. One scholar has found strong evidence that rites associated with the Aztec god Huitzilopochtli were secretly embedded in celebrations devoted to the Virgin de la Soledad. Folk music and dance also helped perpetuate indigenous and African traditions and represented the struggle of the colonial masses for dignity and autonomy.

Popular dances and songs manifested sentiments and values that colonial officials, inquisitors, and clerics often found offensive and in bad taste. One document of the Mexican Inquisition characterized the dances and accompanying lyrics of the lower classes as "lewd and provocative of lasciviousness, causing grave ruin and scandal to the souls of Christendom and in prejudice to the conscience . . . and [were an] offence [*sic*] to edification and good customs."⁸ In similar language, the bishop of Oaxaca lamented that the dances "are not only occasions to sin, but also are sinful in and of themselves . . . because of the lasciviousness of the words, the gestures and movements, the nudity of the dancers, the reciprocal touching of men and women, by taking place in suspicious lower class houses, in the country, in poorly lit neighborhoods at night, and at times when the judges cannot discover them."⁹

Spanish and Portuguese authorities attempted to repress the musical tradition of Africa brought to the New World with the slave trade. Both colonial administrators and the clergy saw these African legacies as potentially subversive and offensive to their morality and sought to control the practice by promoting European musical traditions and by recruiting and training black musicians. As early as the 1560s the Lima city council was receiving repeated complaints about black slaves beating drums and dancing in the streets without inhibition. It responded by trying to limit dancing to two plazas, but these efforts were never very effective as blacks continued to sing and dance throughout the city. Music and public dances (the *candombes*) held by Afro-Argentines in Buenos Aires in the latter half of the eighteenth century also caught the attention of public authorities. The viceroy granted permission to allow the Congo and Cambundá ethnic fellowships to hold dances on Sundays and holidays despite repeated complaints that the dancers engaged in immoral movements. Some of these dances attracted as many as 2,000 participants; one Easter blacks dancing outside a church were so loud that the priest could not conduct services. Drummers and other musicians using percussive instruments provided music that the white population usually disliked.



A group of musicians and dancers in the streets of Trujillo, Peru.

One traveler in the 1770s testily recorded that the sound was so “annoying and disagreeable as to provoke one to stop up his ears and to cause the mules to stampede, and they are the most stolid and least flighty of animals.”¹⁰

Before the Conquest, indigenous cultures employed singing and ritual dancing in feasts and ceremonies honoring their deities, and music and dance persisted as a part of native culture throughout the colonial period. Indigenous music in the Andes, for example, employed several varieties of handmade wooden flutes, a type of small guitar, a bass drum, a tambourine, and a native harp. The seven-hole bamboo flute (*quena*) was particularly popular with men tending flocks. Its music accompanied sweet and melancholy chants (*yaravis*) that professional musicians later turned into songs performed at home by young women from elite families. It was from this conflicted process of cultural synthesis that Latin American popular music originated.

Like music, the theater provided entertainment enjoyed by every segment of society. Initially plays were performed in church courtyards as clerics sought to instruct through entertainment. Freestanding theaters followed, however, and in Lima one known as the Corral de las Comedias opened in 1604. Seventeenth-century productions included such plays as "Noah's Ark" and "Love in Lima Is Fortuitous." Other theaters followed, but the Coliseo de Comedias, reconstructed following the earthquake of 1746, was the most important. Small towns also enjoyed theater; in the Peruvian municipality of Pisco, for example, an amateur group of *mulato* actors presented a play, "The Powerful Prince," in honor of the Feast of the Scapulary. The quality of productions varied, with one of the most scathing evaluations provided by a French traveler who attended the theater in Caracas at the beginning of the nineteenth century. "All the pieces, in themselves most wretched, are, moreover, miserably performed. The declamation of this theatre . . . is a species of monotonous stammering, very like the tone in which an infant of ten years old recites a badly studied lesson. No grace, no action, no inflection of voice, not a single natural gesture; in a word, nothing of that which constitutes the actor of a common theatre."¹¹

Festivals, theater, music, and dance punctuated the lives of the colonial populace. The lubricant of everyday life, however, was gossip. Whether resident in a major city, small town, or mining camp, people talked. Their conversations often focused on themselves and their families, relatives, friends, and compatriots. Residents promptly queried any stranger arriving in town to discover the person's *nación*, home region or *tierra*, occupation, and reasons for traveling. Once *tierra* was established, conversation turned to other persons from the same locale. Rumors and innuendos grew with repeated telling, and no town was so out of the way that serious personal indiscretions could remain unknown. Muleteers, peddlers, migrant workers, and travelers of all sorts purveyed news of those they had seen elsewhere. One of the few known colonial diaries provides great detail that clearly passed from mouth to mouth. A revealing entry reported the death of one Don José Félix de Agüero as follows: "The first word to come from his house at dawn was that he had hanged himself from a water storage rack. Later, word circulated that he had choked from phlegm."¹² In short, curiosity and idle talk combined to fuel still more conversation in an incessant exchange of information, rumor, and potential scandal.

The evolution of authentically Latin American cultural traditions depended heavily on popular forms of dance, music, theater, and humor that blended elements of indigenous, European, and African experience. These popular forms of cultural expression often met resistance or repression from colonial authorities. Commonly these clumsy forms of opposition stimulated new sources of creative energy as common men and women disguised or adapted cultural forms that had been banned. Eventually, in intellectual life and popular culture, as in the marketplace, men and women grew restive within the constraints of the colonial order.

NOTES

1. Nancy M. Farriss, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 94.
2. Quotations from Rebecca Earle, "Luxury, Clothing and Race in Colonial Latin America," in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires, and Delectable Goods*, edited by Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger (Oxford: Macmillan, 2003), p. 220.
3. Robert Ryal Miller (trans. and ed.), *Chronicle of Colonial Lima: The Diary of Joseph and Francisco Mugaburu, 1640–1697* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), p. 92.
4. Juan and Ulloa, *Voyage to South America*, p. 201.
5. John Tate Lanning, *The Royal Protomedicato: The Regulation of the Medical Professions in the Spanish Empire*, edited by John Jay TePaske (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1985), p. 309.
6. Irving A. Leonard, *Baroque Times in Old Mexico* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), p. 178.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
8. Quoted in Sergio Rivera Ayala, "Lewd Songs and Dances from the Streets of Eighteenth-Century New Spain," in *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance*, edited by William H. Beezley, Cheryl English Martin, and William E. French (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1994), p. 31.
9. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 40.
10. Concolorcorvo quoted in George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800–1900* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), p. 167.
11. F. Depons, *Travels in South America, During the Years 1801, 1802, 1803, and 1804* (London: 1807; reprinted New York: AMS Press, 1970), vol. 2, p. 177.
12. Miller, *Chronicle of Colonial Lima*, p. 147.

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CHAPTER 9



Imperial Expansion

CHRONOLOGY

1702-13	War of the Spanish Succession
1714	Creation of secretary of state for the Indies
1717	Reform of Council of the Indies
1717	House of Trade and <i>Consulado</i> of Seville transferred to Cádiz; Council of the Indies loses all control over Indies trade
1717/1739	Creation of Viceroyalty of New Granada
1728	Caracas Company created
1739	British Admiral Vernon takes Portobello
1740	Use of register ships for Spanish South America; fleet system for South America discontinued
1750	End of sale of <i>audiencia</i> appointments; Commercial Treaty with England ends <i>asiento</i>
1750-54	Peak of gold mining in colonial Brazil
1752	<i>Relação</i> of Rio de Janeiro established
1759-60	Expulsion of the Jesuits from Brazil
1762-63	British capture and occupy Havana

THE SPANISH COLONIES: FROM THE WAR OF SUCCESSION TO THE LOSS OF HAVANA

The death of the last Spanish Habsburg, Charles II, provoked the War of the Spanish Succession. England, the Netherlands, Portugal, and the Holy Roman Emperor united to oppose the ascension of Charles's designated heir, the Bourbon candidate Philip V, grandson of the French monarch Louis XIV. From this fear of a possible dynastic union between Spain and France came a war that lasted from 1702 to 1713 and included foreign invasion of Spain and even the temporary occupation of Madrid. The Treaty of Utrecht, which ended the war in 1713, confirmed Philip V as King of Spain and the Indies, reduced Spain's territorial holdings in Europe, and hobbled its commerce with the Indies for decades. Philip V faced familiar problems: how to increase American tax revenues, how to protect the empire, and how to expand Spain's commercial relationship with the colonies. Building on a few hopeful signs visible in the final decades of the reign of Charles II, Philip and his

ministers sought to rebuild Spain's naval power, improve administration and royal income, and expand legal and thus taxable trade between Spain and the Indies. These and other efforts by later eighteenth-century monarchs to provide more uniform, centralized, and effective administration constitute the Bourbon Reforms. Within them, a subset of well-known policy changes during the reign of Charles III often bear the name "Caroline Reforms" or "Reforms of Charles III."

War, Foreign Threats, and the Empire

During the seventeenth century, Spain's declining power and military defeats resulted in treaties and commercial concessions that effectively allowed European rivals to gain access to the colonial market. Combined with lax enforcement, these concessions opened wide the door for contraband with little risk, thus enabling foreigners to dominate trade to the Indies. Philip V's reliance on France during the War of the Spanish Succession pressured him to grant his ally legal access to colonial commerce, a break in Spain's long-claimed monopoly.

The Peace of Utrecht forced Spain to confirm the earlier trading privileges and also to grant England the *asiento*, the right to send 4,800 African slaves to the American colonies each year; to use warehouses for provisioning and maintaining them until sold; and to send with one fleet a year a large ship laden with duty-free goods to sell. These provisions led to a quarter-century of recrimination between Spain and England over the resulting contraband trade and culminated in the War of Jenkins' Ear (1739–48).

A dispute between Spain and Portugal over colonial boundaries led to a conflict over the Portuguese Colônia do Sacramento on the Río de la Plata in the first half of the eighteenth century. The Treaty of Madrid in 1750 called for an exchange of territory, but the failure to implement the provisions fully caused a renewed but inconclusive war.

New Spain's northern boundary of occupied territory, although sparsely settled, expanded substantially in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Threats from the Indians, the French, and the English underscored the need to provide additional defense. The Jesuits established missions in northwestern New Spain as far north as Arizona. After the loss to Indian forces in the disastrous Pueblo revolt of 1680, New Mexico was not resettled until the 1690s. In Texas a series of missions and garrisons were built in the early 1720s as a buffer against French threats to northern Mexico. The establishment of a fort on Pensacola Bay in 1698 and its return to Spain in 1722, after 2.5 years of French occupation, solidified the Spanish presence on the northern Gulf coast. However, French traders remained in Louisiana. In Florida the successful defense of St. Augustine against the English during the wars of the Spanish Succession and Jenkins' Ear emphasized the importance of this northern redoubt in New Spain's defensive perimeter.

Administrative Reforms: An Uneven Course

After gaining international recognition of his rule, Philip V pursued military victory over Catalonia, which in 1705 had joined the rest of the Crown of Aragon in

supporting the Habsburg claimant Archduke Charles. Peace enabled the monarch to consolidate his authority. Immediately he indicated that a more unitary and centralized vision would replace the Habsburgs' patrimonial approach to governance by terminating the autonomy of the Crown of Aragon in 1716. Tighter control, more efficient and uniform administration, a reduction in special privileges that ran counter to royal financial and political interests, and the greater centralization of authority in Madrid were the order of the day for Spain. The same approach would be extended to the colonies in the succeeding decades.

Philip appointed secretaries of state with specific responsibilities that cut deeply into those previously exercised by councils. In this administrative reform, the Council of the Indies lost a great deal of its authority after 1717. Although it remained unchallenged in its judicial powers and continued to enjoy patronage over judicial and ecclesiastical positions, the Council lost power to the secretary of state for the Indies in financial, military, commercial, and general administrative matters. Henceforth one person—the secretary—rather than a committee was responsible for general oversight of the Indies.

Besides restructuring colonial administration at court, the Crown made several efforts to improve administration in the Indies. New Spain, the major source of American bullion since the 1670s and the most populous colony in the New World, received increased attention. Beginning in 1710 Philip sent a series of special investigators to examine the viceroyalty's administrative institutions and to secure additional revenues to support his wartime expenses. For more than two decades these royal agents found accounts in arrears, evidence of fraud, and numerous other mishandlings. They proved better at identifying than rectifying abuses, however.

From the late seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century, the fiscal demands of war repeatedly frustrated efforts at administrative reform in the colonies. The systematic sale of appointments to *audiencia* positions that began in 1687 continued until 1750. During this period, efforts to gain control over the courts by appointing meritorious outsiders floundered with each outbreak of war. Beginning in the 1750s, however, improved finances enabled the Crown to stop selling *audiencia* appointments and slowly to start regaining authority. Probably over 80 percent of the creoles but scarcely 10 percent of the peninsulars named from 1687 to 1750 purchased their initial *audiencia* appointments. Almost 40 percent of the Americans named, moreover, were native sons, men appointed to the tribunal located in their region of birth.

The termination of sales at mid-century initiated a decline in the number of native sons, and before 1763 the new direction of appointments was unmistakable. Of twenty new men named, only four were creoles. The simultaneous royal reluctance to permit additional ministers to establish local ties set the stage for a dramatic assault in the 1770s on the remaining native sons and *radicados*, or locally rooted ministers.

The continued sale of appointments to provincial administrative positions until the mid-eighteenth century undercut intermittent efforts to control exploitation of the natives by provincial administrators. Indeed, the cost of an appointment

and subsequent financial demands by rapacious viceroys intensified the pressure on purchasers and undoubtedly resulted in even greater abuse of office, especially the forced sale of goods to Indian communities. In response to a situation that its own actions had exacerbated, the Crown attempted in 1751 to regulate the prices that officials could charge for forced sales to Indian communities. Its efforts to curb abuse failed, however, and the much-resented exploitation continued unabated.

The Crown sought also to improve revenue collection. The Habsburgs had relied on tax farming for the collection of taxes. In contrast, the Bourbons gradually began to place tax collection directly in the hands of royal bureaucrats. Early moves in this direction affected the powerful *consulados* of Lima and Mexico City. In 1724 the Crown assumed direct control over the *alcabala* and other commercial taxes long administered by Lima's *consulado*. Thirty years later it extended this approach to Mexico.

Demographic Expansion

The population of the Spanish colonies as a whole increased during the first half of the eighteenth century. In New Spain, for example, it grew by nearly 50 percent between the mid-seventeenth and mid-eighteenth centuries. Expanding Spanish and *casta* populations accounted for a disproportionately large share of this increase, although the number of indigenous peoples was also growing. The native population of Peru fell briefly as a result of severe epidemics in the 1720s, but growth resumed by mid-century. Caracas grew slowly but steadily throughout the early eighteenth century and by mid-century had perhaps 30,000 people. Buenos Aires increased from about 11,600 inhabitants in 1744 to 26,125 in 1778. Chile increased from 95,000 people in 1700 to 184,000 in 1755. In Cuba, the population perhaps tripled between 1700 and 1760, numbering some 160,000 in the latter year. The growing availability of labor and a larger pool of consumers stimulated both greater economic production and increased trade. The only notable exception to this pattern was the *audiencia* district of Quito. Its population scarcely grew during the century and its capital city, with just over 20,000 residents at the close of the century, was perhaps only half as large as it had been during the latter half of the seventeenth century.

Mining

In the first decade of the eighteenth century, the combined registered silver production of New Spain and Peru fell to its lowest level since the 1570s. Conditions were different, however, in the two viceroyalties. After 1670 New Spain emerged as the premier silver producer. Buoyed by increased mercury supplies from Spain and rising silver production at Zacatecas, Mexico's output climbed in the 1670s and 1680s before falling from 1691 to 1710. Registered production then reached new highs in each subsequent decade and averaged almost 12 million pesos a year in the 1750s. A shortage of mercury in the early 1760s brought a temporary decline, but new production records were set in each following decade to 1810. Registered silver production in Peru hit bottom between 1701 and 1720 but then

began to improve. Accelerated by the 1736 reduction in the tax rate from a fifth to a tenth, registered production rose in each subsequent decade to the end of the century. Despite the recovery, Peru's production never again came close to that of New Spain. The northern viceroyalty was producing more than double the amount from Peru at mid-century and nearly triple the amount from 1801 to 1810.

Estimated gold production based on official sources in seventeenth-century Colombia was worth only a small fraction, well under 10 percent, of Peru's registered silver production, although actual production was probably much more than that amount. In the eighteenth century, registered gold production set new records each decade and may well have been triple the amount for the previous century. Elsewhere, gold mining regained ground in Chile in the 1690s and increased throughout most of the eighteenth century. Gold production also grew in Mexico and Peru, although their combined total was always less than that of New Granada.

Remission of Bullion and Imperial Profit

Mexico's replacement of Peru as the foremost silver-producing viceroyalty after 1670 was reflected in the amount of public revenues sent to Castile. Between 1651 and 1660, Peru sent 8.6 million pesos to the metropolis, and New Spain sent 4.3 million. In the 1660s, New Spain's remissions exceeded Peru's. By the decade from 1741 to 1750, Peruvian remissions had fallen to 500,000 pesos, whereas those from New Spain had increased to 6.4 million. In the following decade, New Spain's contribution rose to over 16 million pesos, while Peru sent nothing.

Bullion remitted to Spain was only one source of revenue that the Crown derived from the Indies. Comparing the remission of bullion from New Spain and Peru with figures from Cádiz's treasury office records for the Indies reveals that the bullion regularly provided less than 40 percent of the funds collected. Peninsular taxes on the Indies' trade and various fees, fines, and loans collected on the peninsula contributed, from 1731 to 1770, up to three quarters of the revenues. The highest average revenues were collected during the reign of Ferdinand VI (1746-59) and thus coincided closely with the higher level of silver production in New Spain.

Although the significance of American bullion for both the Spanish Crown and the expansion of European trade around the world was immense, its glitter has unfairly overshadowed an even more important source of royal revenue for much of the eighteenth century. The Crown created a royal monopoly over Cuban tobacco in 1717. The contraband sale of Cuban tobacco was often triple the amount of tobacco sent legally to Spain in the 1720s and 1730s and the monopoly made enormous profits from processing and selling the Cuban leaf. From 1740 to 1760 about 85 percent of the tobacco processed by the royal factory in Seville came from Cuba. This monopoly produced annual profits that grew from nearly 4 million pesos in the early 1740s to over 5 million by the late 1750s. Profits from the tobacco monopoly in the 1740s, in other words, exceeded the revenues remitted from New Spain and Peru by more than 400 percent. In the 1750s, the royal income from the tobacco monopoly was still more than twice as large as the extraordinarily high remissions of bullion.

Commerce

The transfer of the House of Trade from Seville to Cádiz in 1717 officially brought together administrators, merchants, and ships in a single port. Influential in the move, José Patiño later became secretary of state for the Indies, navy, and treasury. In this capacity he tried to strengthen Spain by pursuing a mercantilist economic policy that encouraged the production of colonial products for export to Spain. Spain, of course, had traditionally sought to exclude European rivals from colonial trade in a vain effort to ensure its monopoly of bullion. Increasingly, it also fostered commercial agricultural production—for example, Cuban sugar and Venezuelan cacao.

Although the Crown had allowed two small ships to sail each year from Seville to Buenos Aires beginning in 1618 and had always permitted a modest number of single ships to transport goods to the Indies, it refrained until the eighteenth century from authorizing major changes in the fleet system. Beginning in 1701, French ships were allowed to stop at Indies ports for repairs and provisions, which opened the door to illicit trade with Peruvian and Chilean ports. The value of French ships for defense against England and the impossibility of providing regular fleet service during the War of the Spanish Succession prevented the suppression of this contraband. By 1724, 150 French ships had sailed around Cape Horn for Spain's Pacific coast colonies. On occasion colonial officials blatantly skimmed off a percentage of the profit. The quantity of merchandise lowered prices and spelled ruin for the long-decadent fleet system going through Portobelo and the isthmus of Panama. It also weakened the Lima merchant class, and, since European cloth was the major item imported, added to the woes of the declining textile industry in Ecuador.

The Utrecht settlement gave England unprecedented legal access to the American market as well as the facilities for increased contraband trade. Both the *asiento* and the annual ship caused difficulty for Spanish merchants. For example, the South Sea Company established a commercial post in Buenos Aires. From 1715 to 1738, over sixty English ships entered this port carrying slaves and an unknown quantity of merchandise. In addition, illicit goods funneled to Buenos Aires through Portuguese Colônia further diminished the markets for legal goods shipped through Lima. The English sent a larger ship than authorized and sold their less expensive textiles tax free. Because English goods sold for 30 percent less than did goods imported by Spanish merchants, the appearance of an English ship at the fairs of 1722, 1726, 1729, and 1731 disrupted the market. Competition from French and English goods dramatically altered traditional commercial ties between Peru and Spain. While some Spaniards and successive prominent Italian advisors and ministers to the king recognized the need to end Andalusia's monopoly on trade, the humiliating treaty provision that forced Spain to resurrect the fleet system in 1720 made major commercial reform impossible for decades.

The Crown subsequently expanded the use of single, licensed ships sailing directly from Cádiz to designated Atlantic ports. As intended, this provision undercut the fleet system, for it challenged the high transportation costs and monopoly prices of the trade fairs at Portobelo and Vera Cruz. Buenos Aires, in particular, benefited from the greater use of register ships. Through it flowed goods to Upper

Peru and Chile, although such transfers required special permission. Faced with a shrunken market, the *consulado* merchants in Lima, some of whom engaged in contraband trade, opposed holding new fairs.

Although seven fleets sailed to Vera Cruz and four to Portobelo between 1717 and 1738, single ships sailing with purchased licenses transported over 20 percent of the total transatlantic tonnage. The outbreak of the War of Jenkins' Ear, however, marked the true transition from the fleet system to reliance on these register ships. With Portobelo destroyed and the fleet system for South America moribund, the Crown in 1740 extended the use of register ships to the Pacific. The change arose from the sensible belief that fast single ships could more easily escape English naval squadrons than could convoys.

The length of the war also demonstrated that register ships provided faster and more dependable transportation. Purchased permits authorized them to sail from any Spanish port to any South American port between Concepción and Callao. Nearly twenty ships reached Callao by 1748, and over thirty-five more by 1761. The quantity of merchandise reaching Chile and Peru was so great that only by lowering prices and raising the pressure on the indigenous peoples through forced purchases could the merchants sell their wares. One contemporary in Lima reported that "the convents are filled with merchants who have closed their doors and declared themselves bankrupt."¹ Merchants who were no longer protected from competition by means of monopoly sought a return to the fleet system. The new ties created through register ship trading, however, could not be overturned. Despite the merchants' complaints, both consumers and the Crown benefited from an increased volume of trade. Between 1739 and 1756, register ships handled nearly all the trade between Spain and the Indies. Although six more fleets sailed to New Spain in the following two decades, register ships accounted for 80 percent of the ships sailing from Spain to the viceroyalty.

Comparing the average annual shipments to Spain of selected colonial exports from South America (excluding Venezuela) reveals substantial growth in the legal trade. In the 1720s and 1730s, an average of five ships a year carried approximately 2 million pesos of silver and 850,000 pesos of gold, 210,000 pounds of cacao, 50,000 pounds of cascarilla, and 7,500 hides. After the War of Jenkins' Ear, between 1749 and 1755 an average of ten ships a year transported 3.2 million pesos of silver, 2.75 million pesos of gold, 995,000 pounds of cacao, 160,000 pounds of cascarilla, and 42,000 hides. Ship sailings rose from 195 in the first decade of the century to nearly 600 in the 1750s. The estimated tonnage (*toneladas*) transported between Spain and the Indies rose substantially as well.

The introduction of monopoly trading companies charged with handling trade and eradicating contraband from a specified region was another innovation of the first half of the eighteenth century. The most successful company was the Guipúzcoana or Caracas Company, established in 1728. The monopoly given to this group of primarily Basque merchants caused constant friction between Venezuelan cacao planters and company officials, especially over the prices imposed in Venezuela and the curtailment of the planters' participation in the more profitable

contraband trade. Nonetheless, cacao production and legal exportation increased substantially under the company's administration. Venezuela for the first time became fiscally self-supporting. Instead of draining Mexican resources for subsidies, the region actually returned a profit to the Crown starting in the early 1730s.

In Cuba, trade and population expanded in the first half of the eighteenth century. Largely as a result of natural increase, the population grew from perhaps 50,000 in 1700 to about 160,000—about a quarter of whom were slaves—in the late 1750s. The shortage of regular shipping between Cádiz and Havana, however, had long hindered the development of a legal tobacco trade, although contraband flourished. After earlier unsuccessful experiments, the Crown awarded a contract in 1740 to a group of Havana merchants, who formed the Havana Company. The company tried to cut tobacco production so as to eliminate a surplus sold illegally and to increase the production of sugar. It gained a monopoly over the purchase and export of 3 million pounds of high-quality Cuban tobacco to Spain for manufacture at the royal factory in Seville. It also received special tax treatment for exported sugar and hides. Under the company, Cuban trade expanded to a higher level. In the mid-1730s, for example, there were only twenty sailings in five years, a number that grew to fifty-nine between 1758 and 1762. Havana's trade with other American ports, particularly Vera Cruz and Portobelo, also rose, although the total volume was far less than that of the Spanish trade.

The expanding trade reflected increased colonial production. At the same time, the greater regularity of shipping induced producers of agricultural and pastoral products to raise their output even further. An important consequence of this was the economic growth of regions distant from the commercial centers of the old fleet system, and previously able to import only a limited quantity of expensive goods. The Río de la Plata, Chile, Venezuela, and Central America, areas previously on the periphery of imperial trade, had already grown economically before the elimination of additional barriers to trade started in 1765. Each region also had a growing population and rising exports of agricultural or pastoral products. The Río de la Plata benefited, too, from exporting bullion obtained by sending imported goods—textiles, slaves, iron, and other items—into the mining areas of Upper Peru and from trade with Chile. Chile's renewal of gold production in the 1690s further strengthened an economy already expanding as a result of substantial wheat shipments to Peru.

Despite the widening colonial trade, Spanish exports remained limited primarily to agricultural products—wine, brandy, olive oil, and spices—and iron and iron tools not manufactured in the Indies. Indeed, until the late colonial period, most textiles sent to the Indies continued to be reexports of foreign goods. In addition, Spanish exporters in Cádiz remained mainly front men for foreign merchants.

Economic expansion was the most important development in the Indies between the Treaty of Utrecht and the British capture of Havana in 1762. The more efficient exploitation of colonial exports and the expansion of colonial markets were mandatory for Spain to participate again as a great power in European affairs. Although the Utrecht settlement forced Spain to maintain the fleet system, government initiatives sought to expand trade by other means. The use of register

ships, especially after 1740, constituted the most important alteration in Spain's transatlantic trading system since the development of the convoy system in the sixteenth century. This approach was built on individual initiatives to supply American markets through direct trade and was a necessary defensive response to English naval power. The results demonstrated the superiority of register ships over the fleet system and prepared the way for its final elimination in 1789. By that date, however, the Crown had long ceased relying on halfway measures and ad hoc defensive responses to strengthen the empire economically and militarily. Building



Map 7 Colonial Latin America: Political Organization.

on the expanded economic base developed during the first half of the century, the Crown adopted a conscious and persistent policy of increasing royal authority and colonial revenues instead of the earlier piecemeal and inconsistent efforts.

BRAZIL IN THE AGE OF EXPANSION

The discovery of substantial gold deposits beginning in the mid-1690s inaugurated a boom in previously unsettled areas in the Brazilian interior. The rapid growth of population and the attraction of mineral wealth in Minas Gerais and other mining regions led the Portuguese Crown to enlarge the colonial bureaucracy. New transportation networks and commercial relations were developed to supply the mining camps. The prosperity of the mining region placed pressure on the established sugar-producing regions of the northeast by introducing price inflation and greater competition for labor and capital. By the mid-eighteenth century, Brazil's economic center had moved south, although the value of sugar exports continued to exceed that of gold. The transfer of the viceregal capital from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro in 1763 culminated a series of administrative changes that reflected the south's greater economic and political importance as well as heightened tension with Spain along Brazil's border.

But boom became depression as gold production descended steadily after peaking in the early 1750s. The interior's days of glory passed quickly, but by the early 1780s the coastal provinces enjoyed a renewed prosperity. Bolstered by the importation of unprecedented numbers of slaves and improved market conditions, sugar production expanded rapidly in the 1790s. The greater demand for tobacco, cotton, rice, coffee, indigo, and cacao also contributed to coastal Brazil's renewed economic vitality. New government policies helped stimulate this recovery and channel benefits to Portugal.

Administration

The growth of mining centers far from established settlements forced the Portuguese Crown to create new administrative, judicial, and treasury districts. Subdividing the immense territory previously under the jurisdiction of the governor and captain-general of Rio de Janeiro into smaller territorial units was the first step. In 1709 a new captaincy-general, São Paulo e Minas do Ouro, was separated from Rio's jurisdiction. This was later divided, in 1720, into the separate captaincies-general of São Paulo and Minas Gerais. In 1748 two additional captaincies, Goiás and Mato Grosso, were created. After further reorganization in the early 1770s, Brazil had nine captaincies-general and nine subordinate captaincies.

In 1752 a second colonial high court, the new *Relação* of Rio de Janeiro, was established. The great distance separating the frontier mining camps from the old administrative centers led to the subdivision of captaincies into judicial districts (*comarcas*). Both Minas Gerais and Bahia, for example, were divided into four districts. In each, judicial committees made up of the governor and the senior treasury official of the captaincy and the senior judge of the *comarca* administered justice.



Charcoal delivered to the city of Rio de Janeiro.

The administration in Brazil was centered on the towns. By formally elevating mining camps to townships, the Crown committed itself to providing at least skeletal royal administration. The simultaneous extension of land grants and other privileges to these new towns and their officials encouraged further settlement of the interior. Beginning in 1693 a number of new towns were created to improve law and order and to streamline the collection of royal revenue. Although the establishment of towns and the introduction of administrative institutions definitely strengthened royal control in Minas Gerais, there still was little effective control in the sparsely inhabited captaincies of Mato Grosso and Goiás.

A central feature of these administrative reforms was the creation of new treasury offices. Mints were built in each major mining area, to which miners brought their gold for weighing, extraction of the royal fifth, and casting into bars.

In addition, the Crown tried to limit access to the mining areas so that taxes could be collected on imports. Colonists in mining areas were also subject to the usual crown monopolies of salt, wine, and olive oil. Taken together, these taxes, the tithe, and local taxes contributed both to the rising royal revenues and the exorbitant cost of living in the mining regions.

During the second half of the eighteenth century in particular, the Crown sought to tighten its grip on Brazil. Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo was the powerful royal minister who dominated affairs of state from 1750 to 1777. Titled the Marquis of Pombal after 1770, he correctly perceived that Portugal's fortunes rested on the prosperity of its huge American colony. Expanding the Brazilian economy and trade with the metropolis, collecting and expending its tax revenues,

and securing its defenses, particularly in the lands adjoining Spanish America, were central to his goal of strengthening Portugal.

Under Pombal the Ministry of the Navy and Overseas Territories, established in 1736, gained control over colonial affairs. It oversaw general policy implementation and proposed high-ranking civil, military, and ecclesiastical appointments to the king. Pombal expanded the authority of the Board of Trade created in 1755 to develop Portuguese industry and reduce the kingdom's reliance on British imports. Its enlarged scope was recognized in 1788 when it became the Royal Board for Trade, Agriculture, Factories, and Navigation for Portugal and Its Dominions.

The establishment of a new royal treasury in 1761 centralized accounting for Portugal and the empire. Headed by Pombal himself as inspector-general, this agency centralized the supervision of revenue collection and expenditure. The next step in the Crown's fiscal reorganization was the creation during the 1760s and 1770s of treasury boards in each captaincy-general. Within their jurisdictions, the boards oversaw the activities of all departments of the royal exchequer.

The Church

The stronger and more centralized Portuguese monarchy of the eighteenth century took numerous actions that reduced the power of the Church, its foremost institutional rival. Under Pombal the government broke the long-standing tradition of equal and complementary authority exercised by Church and state.

The rapid economic and demographic expansion of the interior gold mining regions was not accompanied by a parallel expansion of clerical influence and authority. The first friars on the scene were deeply involved in gold smuggling, and consequently the Crown banned all religious orders from Minas Gerais in 1711. This ban was not, however, accompanied by an effort to attract secular clergy to the region. Efforts to eliminate the extortionate practices of greedy priests, by paying clerics from the royal treasury and limiting the fees charged for the sacraments, proved ineffective. In fact, these policies kept the Church from establishing itself as securely in the mining zone as it had in northeastern Brazil during the first stages of settlement.

The expulsion of the Society of Jesus from Brazil in 1759–60 demonstrated the Crown's ability to destroy its opponents. The Society was solidly entrenched in Brazil when the Crown signed the Treaty of Madrid in 1750. Jesuit opposition to this treaty, exaggerated rumors of the Society's wealth, and Pombal's outrage at the Jesuits' opposition to his creation of a joint-stock company to exploit the resources of the interior led to the expulsion of the Society from Portugal and the empire and the seizure of its properties. The Crown sold some rural estates but maintained others as royal domain. Jesuit churches passed to the secular clergy, and the Society's colleges were often converted into government or military facilities. Because of the Jesuits' central role in education, the expulsion had a chilling effect on Brazil's cultural life. The diversity and scale of Jesuit holdings meant that the government's action affected urban real estate, ranching, sugar production, and farming. And because the Society was also the colony's largest institutional

slave owner and a source of investment credit, Pombal's decision had unforeseen consequences for the labor and capital markets as well.

The Crown then turned its attention toward the assets of the other orders. It seized the rich cattle ranches and other property of the Mercedarians and forced other orders to lend it money in exchange for government bonds. Coupled with the state's lukewarm support for the secular clergy, these actions toward the Jesuits and other regular clergy represented a significant weakening of the Church in Brazil.

Demographic Expansion

The population of Brazil increased from perhaps 1 million in 1700 to about 1.5 million at mid-century and over 2 million in 1800. Although the mining boom shifted the population south and west, the traditional agricultural economies of the coastal regions maintained their larger, more densely settled populations. Nonetheless, the great gold rushes to the interior were clearly responsible for attracting new immigrants, expanding the slave trade, and stimulating internal migration. This process, in turn, led to the creation of a more diversified, more integrated colonial economy.

Immigrants from Portugal averaged perhaps 3,000 to 4,000 annually during the first twenty years of the century. The flow was sufficiently heavy that in 1720 the Crown strictly limited it through new licensing procedures. After that the annual total probably never reached 2,000. During the first half of the century most of these immigrants went to the mining zones.

In the mining camps Portuguese immigrants soon outnumbered the frontiersmen from São Paulo who had discovered the mines. Mining camps also received an enormous influx of black slaves. In the eighteenth century, Brazil imported approximately 1.7 million slaves from Africa. Despite this large number, the labor demands and capital resources of the mining districts drove up prices and created an internal trade that took slaves away from the plantations of northeastern Brazil. African slaves thus soon formed the backbone of the workforce. In Minas Gerais the number of slaves had reached about 30,000 by 1715, and in Minas Novas slaves were the majority of a population that reached about 40,000 within three years of the initial gold strike.

The drop in gold production that began in the 1750s reoriented the African slave trade toward the newly developed agricultural areas of the coast and, after 1791, to the sugar zone near Salvador. The imports of slaves during the second half of the eighteenth century almost certainly equaled those between 1700 and 1750. Between 1800 and 1810, another 200,000 slaves were imported. Because the African slave trade continued to carry a high proportion of males to females, there was a low rate of natural reproduction in this portion of the slave population. Among slaves born in Brazil, birth rates were similar to those of the free population. Nevertheless, a high mortality rate—the result of tropical diseases like yellow fever, poor nutrition and medical care, rudimentary housing, and harsh working conditions—continued to limit the growth of the slave population.

The racial composition of Brazil in the early nineteenth century naturally reflected the massive importation of slaves; nearly two thirds of the population was African or of African descent. Slaves were the most numerous class, 38 percent of the population. Free blacks and *mulatos* together made up 28 percent, an amount equal to that of the white population. Within the settled regions of Brazil, Indians represented only 6 percent of the population.

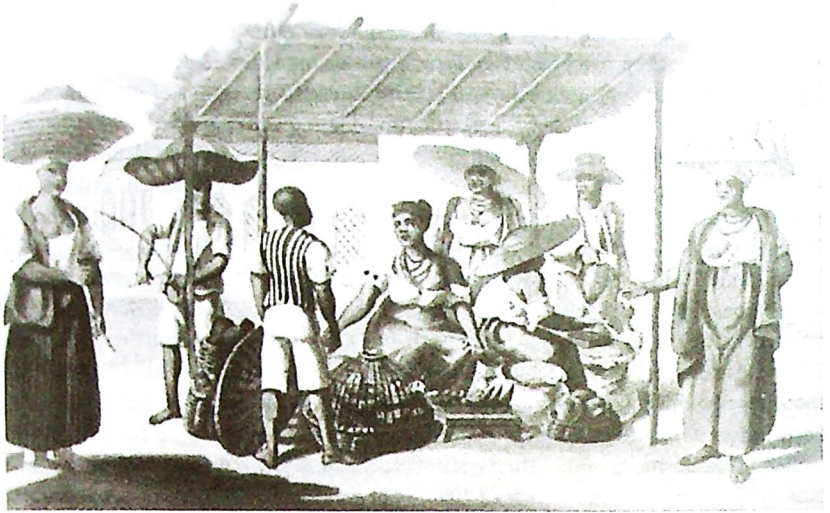
Brazil's population at the turn of the nineteenth century was densest on the northeastern coast. The captaincies-general of Pernambuco, Bahia, and Rio de Janeiro accounted for nearly 60 percent of the population. The mining region of Minas Gerais was the most populous single captaincy-general, with over 400,000 inhabitants, 20 percent of Brazil's total population. Brazil's two largest cities were on the coast: The populations of Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, both major exporting cities, hovered around 50,000, and both increased by 50 percent or more after 1750. In contrast, the third largest city, São Paulo, grew little in this period. Although only thirty miles from the Atlantic, the city's transportation and communication with the coast were impeded by difficult terrain. Still, São Paulo had 24,000 inhabitants in 1803. The ports of Recife and São Luis were the only other cities with populations in excess of 20,000 persons. Ouro Prêto, the most populous city of Minas Gerais, demonstrated the volatility of boomtown populations, falling from some 20,000 inhabitants in the 1740s to just 7,000 in 1804.

Society

Brazilian society in the eighteenth century remained hierarchical. Place of birth, wealth, occupation, race, and legal status were used to classify individuals and assign privileges and rights. The mining boom and later agricultural recovery altered the demographic components of this colonial society and extended the social apparatus of class and race across new territory. Although the society in 1808 shared important characteristics with that of 1700, it was more dynamic and fluid and also more violent and unpredictable.

The mining boom attracted a wave of immigration from Portugal. Only a tiny minority of these new arrivals made fortunes in gold and diamond mining, but their presence altered society significantly. As a result of this relatively large population of recent immigrants, the settlements of the mining district and southern coastal region confronted much more directly the cultural and political meaning of colonial status. The inherent tension between metropolitan assertiveness and the natural proprietary sense of the colonial natives eventually led to armed conflict in 1708–09. The War of the *Emboabas* (tenderfeet) pitted the Paulistas against the Portuguese and northern Brazilian migrants. Significantly, the interlopers prevailed.

Another important result of the century's economic dynamism was the creation of a large number of newly wealthy men. The mining elite of boomtowns like Ouro Prêto and Sabará were generally rough, uncultured men with little prior experience in the exercise of power or the enjoyment of social leadership. Their wealth gave them the ability to build and consume on a grand scale, but their



A market scene from Rio de Janeiro. Slave and free black women dominated the food markets of the city.

combination of exuberance and limited cultural breadth produced as many excesses as works of art. As one contemporary put it,

Those who had amassed great wealth from their diggings were led thereby to behave with pride and arrogance. They went about accompanied by troops . . . ready to execute any violence and to take the greatest and most frightful revenge, without any fear of the law. The gold incited them to gamble lavishly, and heedlessly to squander vast sums on vain luxuries. For instance, they would give one thousand *cruzados* for a Negro trumpeteer; and double that price for a mulata [sic] prostitute, in order to indulge with her in continual and scandalous sins.²

The cotton, rice, and cacao booms produced their *nouveau riche* as well. The recovery of sugar prices and an expanded Atlantic trade reinvigorated these sectors of the landed elite, but in the late eighteenth century, social power in Brazil was more dispersed than before. The social and political consequences of this geographic dispersion were magnified by the new elite's predisposition to stay in the countryside. Governor Luís Antônio de Sousa complained in 1766 that São Paulo was a desolate place because plantation owners visited town only on the most important occasions.

These centrifugal forces were partly compensated by greater economic integration. Merchants, government officials, and large-scale agriculturalists diversified their investments to protect themselves from changing market conditions. There was a reciprocal social integration as well. Increased physical mobility, the

diversification of economic activity, and a set of social presumptions that emphasized family-based associations all encouraged elite families to establish cross-sectoral linkages through marriage and godparents.

These patterns could also be found in the middle sectors, but an added racial dimension made them more complex. Skilled artisans, lower-level functionaries, junior officers, retail merchants, and other groups that made up the middle groups of the colony's cities were drawn from immigrant and native-born whites and from racially mixed populations, and none was likely to be deeply rooted in a region. Instead, they often sought marginal economic benefits by moving to new locations. The most successful acquired property, owned and employed slaves in their households and businesses, and were officers in the colonial militia. This diverse class also provided the social arena in which miscegenation played an important role. Unsure of their status and ambitious for upward social mobility, the members of this class were careful to measure the racial antecedents as well as the economic prospects of their prospective mates.

In rural areas the middle sector included the *lavradores de cana*, the independent cane growers who helped supply larger refiners, and a growing class of small-scale farmers who seldom relied on slave labor. Also common were tenants who traded labor or a portion of their crops for the right to farm or ranch on another's land and skilled rural workers, including overseers, artisans, skilled refining workers, and ranch foremen. With the exception of the *lavradores*, they were usually racially mixed persons. Both *lavradores de cana* and tenants were particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in the economy. Because they were often in debt and unprotected by diversification, falling prices, drought, and other natural disasters could ruin them.

The urban and rural underclass formed the base of Brazil's free black and *mulato* population. Illegitimacy, family instability, and criminal behavior were common, but these problems were similarly present among poor whites. Because the colonial economy invested little in education or training, the under classes of both city and countryside had few opportunities for upward social mobility. During boom periods most could secure steady employment and, as a result, adequate food and minimum housing. But when bust followed boom, the demand for labor fell, and many poor people were forced into begging, crime, or migration. Slaves, however, still remained the largest class of deprived colonial residents.

Gold Production

Efforts to estimate Brazil's gold production are limited by the unreliability of the surviving tax records. Whether based primarily on tax or foundry records, production estimates must be increased to include contraband. Sixteen times more valuable than silver per ounce, gold tempted miners to employ all manner of ruses to avoid the heavy taxes levied by the Portuguese Crown. Indeed, one contemporary estimated that over two thirds of the gold mined in Brazil was never declared.

The value of gold production in Brazil quickly outpaced silver output in the Spanish mining zones. Registered gold production expanded from 1691 to 1720

and then more than doubled from 1721 to 1730. The years 1731–60 included the overall peak reached in the early 1750s when mining in Goiás reached its apogee, and that of Minas Gerais, consistently Brazil's largest producer, was still very high. Subsequent production levels then decreased. Because of tax evasion, the actual output may have been twice the size of figures found in tax records. The data suggest that Brazilian gold produced between 1731 and 1760 was equal to approximately 255 million Spanish silver pesos, thus exceeding in value Peru's best comparable thirty-year period (1611–40). Mexico's extraction of silver did not surpass that of Brazil's peak years until the 1780s.

Sometime after 1720, diamonds were discovered near the gold boomtown of Vila do Príncipe. Miners and colonial officials initially tried to keep the discovery secret to avoid taxes and regulation. By 1730, however, the Crown moved aggressively to organize and control exploration and development. The flow of Brazilian diamonds caused a crash in European prices and led the Crown to send military units to enforce an outright ban on production. Controlled production was then permitted by a system of monopoly arrangements, although smuggling remained common.

Brazil's gold production and the simultaneous boom in diamond mining in northern Minas Gerais increased the flow of funds to the royal treasury. At the same time, the development of these mining regions produced countervailing demands. Although never adequate to deal with the needs of the turbulent interior, the establishment and continued operation of administrative, judicial, military, and ecclesiastical organizations were nonetheless expensive. This cycle of taxation and expenditure worked to redistribute wealth away from the mining sector to



Closely supervised slaves mining diamonds in Brazil.

other social groups and geographic regions, most importantly to the metropolitan economy. It may well be that the public sector's role in Brazil tended to limit investment in exploration, technology, and labor—thereby hindering the growth of production—but it also helped expand the colony's middle sectors, thus encouraging a more broad-based consumer class and stimulating domestic as well as transatlantic commerce.

Economy and Trade

As had occurred in the mining districts of Spanish America, rich mineral strikes in Brazil quickly brought together entrepreneurs, laborers, adventurers, freeloaders, clerics, and royal officials. All required food and drink, housing, and clothing. The more successful also sought luxury items whose consumption would reveal their good fortune.

There were numerous beneficiaries of the growth of the mining regions. The salted beef industry of southern Brazil, for example, profited by the demand for nonperishable food in Minas Gerais. An abundance of gold and a scarcity of nearly every article of basic consumption led to massive price inflation in the mining zone. This, in turn, promoted the rapid development of livestock raising, agriculture, and artisan manufacture. Cattle raising near the mines prospered as miners sought to reduce their dependence on beef imported from other regions. Royal land grants of several square leagues enabled cattlemen to settle near the mines or along transportation arteries. Land grants also enabled small farmers and stockmen to produce staples like pigs and chickens and manioc and other crops. Slaves cultivated a variety of crops for their own subsistence and in limited amounts for market. Thus, prosperous agricultural and pastoral activities flourished with the rise in number of miners, slaves, and other residents.

The decline in the gold and diamond production that began in the late 1750s inaugurated a period of economic depression for Brazil. Economic recovery was not evident until the early 1780s and was largely confined to the agricultural belt along the coast. International conflicts, increased industrial demand in Europe, and the devastation of Haiti's sugar production after 1791 as a result of revolutionary violence combined to benefit Brazilian agricultural exports. Total sugar exports roughly doubled between 1790 and 1807, reaching nearly 25,000 metric tons in the last year.

Grown commercially beginning only in 1760, cotton emerged as Brazil's second leading export by the close of the century. Production began in Maranhão, and for some forty years the captaincy held the lead among Brazilian regions. By the early nineteenth century, however, Pernambuco was exporting a greater amount of higher-quality cotton. The growth of French and especially English cotton textile industries during the early stages of the Industrial Revolution inflated prices and spurred production. Although dependent on expensive slave labor, cotton could be processed for less money than could sugar. In addition, because there was no cost equivalent to that of the necessary grinding and refining of sugar, cotton could be produced more quickly in response to escalating demand.

In 1782 England imported about £9,000 worth of Brazilian cotton. Within five years Brazil's cotton exports to England surpassed £150,000 and occasionally surpassed £200,000 in succeeding decades. Although Brazil supported an unfavorable balance of trade with Portugal and England at mid-century, by 1791 England was exporting silver to pay for Brazilian imports.

In the late eighteenth century, tobacco, produced primarily in Bahia, continued to be exported legally to Portugal and as contraband to Buenos Aires and Upper Peru. It was particularly important to sustaining the trade in slaves on the African coast. Far surpassed in value by both sugar and cotton as the century closed, tobacco nonetheless remained a vital export for Bahia, winning profitable markets in Africa and in the distant Canadian fur trade. Other exports included hides, rice, wheat, coffee, cacao, and a number of lesser products. Rio de Janeiro was the colony's export leader, followed by Pernambuco, Bahia, and Maranhão.

The continuation of a profitable trade in Brazilian agricultural exports, especially sugar, and the windfall profits of the gold and diamond booms led Portugal to abandon its efforts to promote manufacture begun in the late seventeenth century in the face of serious deficits and fiscal crisis. The Methuen Treaty of 1703 and the Brazilian bonanza tightened Portugal's commercial ties with England. In exchange for preferential treatment for its wine, Portugal increased imports of English cloth, ready-made garments, tools, hardware, and metals. Brazil's gold and diamonds were used to balance Portugal's chronic trade deficit. The unexpected and rapid decline in gold production after 1750 reduced the royal revenues substantially, at a time when Lisbon was still being rebuilt after the destructive earthquake of 1755 and Portugal was having to pay the costs of war with Spain.

Faced with declining trade and a revenue shortfall in the 1760s and 1770s, the Crown tried to improve the quality of Brazilian sugar and tobacco exports and develop more profitable marketing arrangements. In addition, it attempted to stimulate northern Brazil's economy and revive the long-suffering northeastern coastal zone. The Marquis of Pombal created local boards of inspection in Brazil's leading ports and established monopoly trading companies to stimulate agricultural production and promote exports. Inspection boards were set up in Salvador, Rio de Janeiro, São Luis do Maranhão, and Recife. They mediated disputes between producers and merchants and supervised weights and measures and quality control. More important, they set wholesale prices, theoretically at levels to maximize the market share of Brazilian exports. In practice, however, this strategy increased profits for the Portuguese shippers and merchants at the expense of the colonial growers and refiners. Colonial manufacturing, on the other hand, was actively discouraged. This approach culminated in 1785 when the Crown prohibited colonial manufacturers from producing textiles other than rough cloth used for slave clothing.

In 1755 the Crown established the Company of Grão Pará and Maranhão, granting it a twenty-year monopoly over shipping and the slave trade with the northern captaincies. This action was accompanied by a prohibition against itinerant Portuguese traders participating in colonial trade. A second Company of

Pernambuco and Paraíba was founded in 1759 to handle trade with these two captaincies. Together these companies represented a conscious effort to rationalize the Luso-Brazilian trading system. Until their demise following the death of José I and Pombal's fall from power in 1777, the monopolistic companies increased slave imports and provided more reliable shipping for the regions they served. They also promoted the consumption of products produced in new Portuguese state-supported factories whose creation Pombal had encouraged. When local economic interests and the Jesuits protested against the creation of the first of these monopolies and a simultaneous change in Indian labor policy, Pombal reacted forcefully to silence the dissent.

British opposition to changes in the Luso-Brazilian trading system and the threat of renewed warfare on the border with Spanish settlements in the Río de La Plata prevented Pombal from extending the monopolistic trading companies to Rio de Janeiro and Bahia. Instead, he sought to expand trade by ending the fleet system in 1765. Henceforth, licensed individual ships carried most of the goods between Portugal and Brazil. In the following year, the prohibitions against coastal trade among Brazilian ports were removed.

Expanding Brazilian trade helped Portugal enjoy a favorable balance of trade with other European nations. Even its historic imbalance with England was reversed by 1791, largely as a result of the reexport of Brazilian products. However, these favorable trade statistics merely disguised Portugal's long-term structural disadvantage in commercial competition. Not only did Portuguese ships carry large amounts of British goods to Brazil, but from 1801 to 1807, metropolitan manufactures and legal reexports of English goods declined substantially as a result of increased British smuggling. In 1800 alone, thirty British ships reached Rio de Janeiro. As a consequence, Portugal frequently had an unfavorable balance of payments with important Brazilian captaincies. Unable to compete with England's increasingly efficient manufactures, Portugal was also losing its profitable position as a transportation and commercial link between Brazil's plantations and England's factories.

Luso-Spanish Rivalry

Beginning in 1680 with the first foundation of Colônia do Sacramento across the estuary of the Río de la Plata from Buenos Aires, Portugal challenged Spain's control of a region that extended from the estuary north to the captaincy of São Paulo and from the Atlantic west to the Uruguay and Paraná rivers. Portugal was interested mainly in commercial access to the silver of Potosí. Spain, in turn, wanted to close down the contraband trading post of Colônia and gain a buffer zone between Buenos Aires and Brazil. These conflicting objectives led to repeated Spanish attacks on Colônia in the 1760s and 1770s.

By the Treaty of Madrid (1750), Portugal gave up its claims to Colônia and the lands adjoining the Río de la Plata. Spain relinquished the "Seven Missions" lands between the Uruguay and Ibicui rivers, where the Society of Jesus had seven missions and some 30,000 neophytes, and agreed that the Society and its charges would withdraw from the region. This compromise agreement failed, however,

because of opposition by powerful interests in Portugal and Spain. Resistance by the Jesuits and mission Indians led to open warfare between 1754 and 1756 and convinced royal advisers in both Iberian countries to push for the expulsion of the Society. The treaty's abrogation in 1761 left war as the final recourse.

In October 1762, Spanish troops led by Pedro de Cevallos, governor of Buenos Aires, took Colônia and then conquered coastal Rio Grande in Brazil. Under the terms of the Peace of Paris, Spain returned Colônia but continued to occupy coastal Rio Grande. Intermittent armed conflict and ineffective efforts to blockade Colônia led to decisive action in 1776. An expeditionary force of nearly 20,000 men led by the first viceroy of the Rio de la Plata, Pedro de Cevallos, took Santa Catarina Island and Colônia in 1777 but failed to recover Rio Grande. The Treaty of San Ildefonso signed in October 1777 finally settled the boundary conflict. Portugal regained Santa Catarina and coastal Rio Grande but lost Colônia. Spain retained the Seven Missions lands and the Banda Oriental. This boundary remained unchanged until the Portuguese seized the Seven Missions lands in 1801.

Luso-Spanish rivalry carried a heavy price. Both countries committed vast sums of colonial revenue to support soldiers, sailors, and ships. Falling mining revenues and depressed trade in the 1760s and 1770s left the Portuguese Crown particularly hard-pressed. Administrators in Brazil curtailed unnecessary expenses, borrowed money, and delayed paying bills whenever possible. The costs of maintaining a large army created a budget deficit and diverted funds from investment in infrastructure. From the mid-1770s onward, the viceregal treasury's debt increased substantially, despite reduced remittances to Portugal.

The Enlightenment

As the eighteenth century progressed, the writings of the French *philosophes* and other "enlightened" authors entered the intellectual cultures of Portugal and Spain. The Enlightenment's challenge to traditional authority, its emphasis on the use of reason, and reliance on observation, experience, and experimentation reached the colonies, but only a few colonial residents in urban centers actually read and discussed the new ideas. However, a larger number were initiated indirectly through sermons, informal discussions in academies and salons, and illegal pamphlets and graffiti.

With no university in the colony, young Brazilian men had to travel abroad for higher education and professional training. Portugal's University of Coimbra attracted the most Brazilian students, but others attended Montpellier in France and a few studied at other universities. Following the expulsion of the Jesuits, who had dominated education in Portugal as well as Brazil, Pombal reformed Coimbra's curriculum. After 1772 a reinvigorated faculty employed modern methods emphasizing experimentation, observation, and the critical use of reason. Students of this era returned to Brazil carrying exciting new ideas and recent publications that circulated in a wider circle.

One manifestation of the Enlightenment in Brazil was a new passion to examine the natural environment. Geography and biology gained a wider audience.

The collection and classification of indigenous plants became popular among some intellectuals. And naturalists helped instill a growing pride in Brazil and an awareness of its uniqueness.

The Enlightenment's arsenal of ideas also contained revolutionary political and economic implications, many of which were manifested in the American and French revolutions. The ideals of independence, liberty, equality, and fraternity quickly found Brazilian partisans, although few people actively argued for a revolution against Portuguese authority. In Brazil, educated men and women generally worked to reform commercial and political structures rather than to instigate violent change. This moderation was rooted in the colony's dependence on slave labor and a racial caste system that inhibited the development of Brazilian nationalism.

Spain from the War of the Spanish Succession to the loss of Havana in 1762 sought to expand legal commerce, combat rampant contraband by the English in particular, and improve administration. The creation of the Viceroyalty of New Granada, a reduction in tax farming, the termination of the sale of appointments to a variety of royal positions, and, after 1750, an emphasis on appointing peninsulars to office were all means to strengthen administration. More important than these administrative changes was demographic and economic expansion. Increasing population throughout the empire, growing American markets, rapidly expanding silver production in New Spain, and the use of joint-stock companies and register ships combined to expand the economic base in the Indies. As a result, Charles III could confidently turn to the Americas as a means to enable Spain to participate again as a great power in European affairs.

Gold mined in the first half of the eighteenth century, along with a profitable sugar trade, made Brazil the means for Portugal's rapidly expanding trade with Britain, and an era of unprecedented prosperity followed until the 1750s. Immigration from Portugal increased, and the importation of African slaves continued apace. Then declining gold and diamond production pummeled the Brazilian economy while the catastrophic earthquake of 1755 shattered Lisbon. The future Marquis of Pombal quickly emerged as Portugal's most powerful politician and instituted a series of reforms that improved tax collection in Brazil, reduced Portugal's reliance on British imports, and anticipated Spain in expelling the Society of Jesus. By the 1780s economic recovery was evident in the sugar industry and the expansion of cotton exports. The economic expansion of Brazil in the eighteenth century made it, not Portugal, the more dynamic partner in an increasingly inverted colonial relationship.

NOTES

1. Sergio Villalobos R., *El Comercio y la Crisis Colonial* (Santiago, Chile: Universidad de Chile, 1968), p. 77.
2. C. R. Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil, 1695-1750* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962), p. 53.

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CHAPTER 10

The Era of Caroline Reforms

CHRONOLOGY

1759-88	Reign of Charles III
1763	Havana returned to Spain by Peace of Paris; viceregal capital of Brazil moved from Salvador, Bahia, to Rio de Janeiro
1764-87	Introduction of intendant system throughout Spanish colonies except for New Granada
1765-71	General <i>visita</i> of New Spain by José de Gálvez
1765-89	Initiation and expansion of "free trade within the empire"
1767	Expulsion of the Jesuits from Spanish America and Spain
1776	Visitors-general sent to Peru and New Granada
1776-87	José de Gálvez serves as secretary of state for the Indies
1777	Establishment of the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata
1780-83	Tupac Amaru II rebellion in Peru and Upper Peru
1781	<i>Comunero</i> revolt in New Granada
1789	Tiradentes conspiracy in Minas Gerais, Brazil
1790	Elimination of separate secretaries of state for American affairs; suppression of House of Trade
1790s	Economic societies established in many cities of the Indies
1798	Conspiracy in Salvador, Bahia
1788-1808	Reign of Charles IV

The British capture of Havana in 1762 humiliated Charles III (1759-88) and his advisers. Its implications—future military defeats and the loss of additional colonies—drove them to institute more ambitious and costly changes to imperial defense and administration than either Philip V (1700-46) or Ferdinand VI (1746-59) had initiated. To pay for a stronger army in the Indies, Charles sought to tighten control over colonial officials, provide a more uniform administrative system within Spain and the Indies, improve tax collection, and establish new royal monopolies. Additionally, the monarch continued a regalist policy of expanding royal authority at the expense of the Church. As was true in Portugal under Pombal, more centralized authority and regalism characterized the Caroline Reforms, as the reforms of Charles III and Charles IV (1788-1808) are known.

RECONFIGURATION OF EMPIRE

During the late colonial period the population and economies of Spain's once-stagnant peripheral colonies, Cuba, Chile, the Río de la Plata, and New Granada, grew rapidly. At times famines and epidemics or short-term disruptions of the Atlantic commercial system or regional trade networks interrupted this growth, but all these colonies were richer and more populous in 1800 than 1700. Despite these occasional disruptions, the economic expansion of the periphery during the last hundred years of the mainland empire paralleled the rapid growth experienced in Peru and New Spain during the early stages of the sixteenth-century mining boom.

The peripheral colonies emerged in this period as profitable exporters of agricultural and mineral goods as well as important new markets for Spanish products, adding substantially to the empire's economic integration and vitality. In these colonies, the landowners and merchants who were major beneficiaries of Spain's commercial and administrative reforms organized the production and export of hides, processed animal products, and agricultural commodities—tobacco, cacao, yerba, wheat, coffee, and sugar. Domestic markets in peripheral colonies also improved as small farmers profited from supplying the food needs of fast-growing cities and urban workers earned more income, consumed more goods, and lived more comfortable lives. Buenos Aires, Caracas, and Havana were all major beneficiaries of this new dynamism.

Changes in colonial administrative structures helped promote economic growth in the peripheral colonies. The creation of two new viceroalties, New Granada and Río de la Plata, pumped money and people into Bogotá and Buenos Aires and facilitated regional commercial integration. Increased military expenditures, especially after the British capture of Havana in 1762, also tended to redistribute wealth from the older mining economies of New Spain and Peru, which were forced to subsidize the agricultural and grazing economies of the periphery.

Standing Armies and Militias

The Peace of Paris that ended the Seven Years' War in 1763 imposed significant territorial adjustments in the Americas. After a brief British occupation, Havana was returned to Spanish rule, Spain relinquished Florida to Britain, and France ceded Louisiana to Spain. Faced with the likelihood of additional British attacks, the Spanish Crown immediately began strengthening the fortifications and defense of Havana but soon turned its attention to the mainland as well, starting with New Spain. The reform program for the military rested on regular troops complemented by "disciplined" or provincial militia to keep expenses down. Veteran officers from Spain would train the properly equipped new militias and native-son and *radicado* members of local elites would purchase commissions as officers. As a result, Spanish military planners hoped the colonies would develop the prepared reserve forces absent when the British took Havana in 1762.

Of the 10,550 troops authorized for duty in the Indies in 1739, only about 8,000 soldiers were serving in the garrisons of the colonies. By 1770, the number of

soldiers in the Indies had been increased to about 14,000. An even greater expansion occurred between 1770 and 1800, with the number of troops rising to more than 29,000.

Both the number of units and total of troops varied substantially from location to location and the timing and character of reforms varied as well, of course. From 2,330 troops at Havana in May 1762, the Cuban garrison expanded to nearly 4,000 by 1788. In both New Spain and Peru, the authorized regular forces more than tripled between 1760 and 1800, reaching 6,150 in New Spain, excluding the frontier outposts in the north, and about 2,000 in Peru. Colonial militias also expanded substantially after 1760, although these soldiers were seldom adequately armed or trained. In 1800 New Spain's militiamen numbered almost 24,000 and Peru's around 18,000. In New Granada, the disciplined militia of nearly 8,000 men in 1794 complemented some 3,600 regular army troops.

The creation of standing armies in the colonies brought unprecedented numbers of peninsular officers and soldiers to the New World. While native sons and other creoles had secured 60 percent of low-ranking officerships in the standing army of New Spain by 1810, they held only four of forty-five line positions of brigadier general, colonel, and lieutenant colonel. Peninsulars' predominance in the highest ranks aggravated the discrimination that creoles also observed in the civil and ecclesiastical hierarchies. Nonetheless, between 1740 and 1810, the proportion of American-born officers rose from nearly 35 to 60 percent. Because the Crown sold commissions in colonial militias, the participation of locally born creoles among militia officer ranks was very substantial. Suspicions about the loyalty of these officers, however, led the Crown routinely to assign each militia unit a regular army officer from the peninsula to supervise training.

To promote enlistment in the colonies, the Crown extended a number of benefits, including the military *fuero*, the judicial right for officers, soldiers, and their dependents to be heard by a military rather than a civil court in a variety of civil and criminal cases. These perquisites, however, lured too few volunteers into colonial armies that featured low pay, harsh discipline, and poor prospects for advancement. Consequently, recruiting teams scoured taverns, gambling dens, and jails. The alcoholics, gamblers, and vagabonds they enlisted joined convicted criminals sentenced to serve their terms in the army. Recruits in New Spain and other colonies often received defective weapons and were sometimes charged for repairs. Because they often were not paid, some soldiers pawned or sold their weapons, uniforms, and shoes in order to survive, drink, and gamble or, sometimes, to aid their desertion. Not surprisingly, contemporaries frequently considered soldiers more as scourges than defenders of the land, and the army, despite reform, failed to become an honored and prestigious institution.

These efforts to expand and improve the military placed a heavy burden on Spanish colonial treasuries. While military reforms were never fully funded, the expense increased. Military costs rose from about 2 million pesos in 1690 to over 7 million in 1730, reached about 18 million in 1770, and peaked at 20 million in 1790. In late eighteenth-century New Spain, the central treasury's expenditures for

defense more than doubled between the early 1760s and the early 1780s. In Peru, indigenous rebellions in the 1780s raised military costs even higher. In strategically important Cuba, the salaries of regular army units were nearly 650,000 pesos per year. Since the island's treasury had only 178,000 pesos in income, solvency depended on annual subsidies sent by the Mexican treasury. In the jurisdiction of Buenos Aires, military salaries cost the treasury more than 3 million pesos between 1796 and 1800. Two smaller interior cities of the viceroyalty, Córdoba and Santa Fe, devoted nearly 90 percent of their public expenditures to military salaries and subsistence.

Military expenditures had broad economic effects. Major fortification projects at Havana and Cartagena affected local labor markets and pushed up wages for both skilled and unskilled workers. Even in regions where military construction was limited, enlistments in regular army units and part-time militia service tended to alter the labor supply. Additionally, the increased demand for food, shelter, and clothing stimulated local markets and led to higher employment levels. The fact that the government paid soldiers and officers in cash was in itself helpful to the entire economy, as this promoted more complex commercial relations. The military in Cuba, for example, spent more than 30 million pesos during Spain's participation in the British colonies' struggle for independence. This infusion of capital, in turn, directly underwrote the local elite's ambitious plans to enlarge the sugar industry.

Territorial Reorganization

The Crown's efforts to improve colonial administration influenced the peripheral colonies more than the old viceregal centers. The vulnerability to enemy attack of lands adjoining the Caribbean and the intractable problem of contraband trade led the Crown to carve out a third viceroyalty from northern portions of the Viceroyalty of Peru. Permanently established in 1739, the Viceroyalty of New Granada combined the *audiencia* districts of Santa Fe de Bogotá, Quito, Panama, and the coastal districts of Venezuela.

Cuba was made a captaincy-general in 1764. Venezuela gained greater political and fiscal autonomy in 1777 when Caracas became the capital of another captaincy-general. The creation of the *Audiencia* of Caracas in 1786 severed that region's judicial dependence on Santo Domingo and Bogotá.

The most significant change in colonial political organization occurred on the Viceroyalty of Peru's southeastern flank. This vast, sparsely populated region was vulnerable to both military attack and commercial penetration by Spain's rivals. Until definitively evicted in 1776 by a large military force led by Pedro de Cevallos, the Portuguese maintained Colônia do Sacramento as a center for contraband trade on the northeastern bank of the estuary of the Río de la Plata. The victorious Cevallos then inaugurated in 1777 a new viceroyalty that included the modern nations of Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, and part of Chile. Erecting an *audiencia* in the capital of Buenos Aires in 1783 completed the reorganization.

In 1776 the Crown sought to strengthen the oversight and defense of the vast northern provinces of New Spain against the attacks of still-unpacified indigenous peoples and grasping European powers by establishing the Commandancy General of the Provincias Internas. The empire's final major administrative reform occurred in 1787 when the Crown finally established the *Audiencia* of Cuzco.

Changes in Administration

The establishment of new territorial units necessitated the creation of numerous additional executive and supporting offices. As the Crown pursued greater revenues for defense, it tightened control over administrators, assumed direct responsibility over previously contracted activities like tax collection, and expanded the number of royal monopolies, most notably over tobacco. The efforts to realize these objectives predictably raised the cost of colonial administration.

Through the sale of appointments and positions, the Crown had fostered the corrupt, inefficient bureaucracy it deplored. Lacking the funds to buy out the purchasers, often young native sons and other creoles, the Crown embarked on a policy of attrition accompanied by a conscious policy of favoring peninsulars to fill colonial administrative vacancies as they appeared. Continuing this policy as it staffed the most important new offices in the colonies, the Crown further diluted, although never eliminated, local influence in government. In Lima, for example, thirteen of eighteen *audiencia* ministers in 1750 had been born in the colony, but by 1780 only five native sons remained. Later *audiencia* appointments continued to highlight the Crown's discrimination against native sons.

Complementing its efforts to reduce local influence, the Crown took direct control of imperial tax collection. Doing so increased the number of bureaucrats. Overall, the total of government employees in Lima nearly doubled between the mid-1770s and 1790. In New Spain the number of well-paid posts probably quadrupled as a result of these reforms. A significant expansion of well-paid positions in Chile occurred as well, but native sons proved remarkably successful in gaining appointments to them.

During this period of imperial reform, the Crown opened, closed, and re-located treasury offices in response to changing economic conditions and fiscal circumstances. For example, as the economy grew in Chile, Charles III established three new treasury offices. In the Río de la Plata the Crown sought to maximize its income by adding many new fiscal offices in interior provinces after the initiation of "free trade within the empire" in 1778.

The best-known administrative innovation was the establishment of the intendant system. Reacting in part to the well-known abuses of *corregidores* and *alcaldes mayores*, this reform sought to impose administrative uniformity in both Spain and the empire. José de Gálvez, the most vigorous supporter of this reform, noted on concluding his *visita* in New Spain that it would be

more satisfactory and practicable for the chief executive of this kingdom to have under his immediate orders twelve intendants, carefully chosen, whose character is above reproach, than to have to suffer and contend with two hundred wretches

who, with their empty title of judges, have come to constitute an independent judicial sphere, wherein, driven by their own greed, they work out their own fortunes at the expense of the royal treasury and the ruin of the people.¹

Adopted from French and Spanish precedents, the intendant system sought to reduce the autonomy of district administrators. This new layer of colonial administration was first installed in Cuba in 1764 and then extended to Louisiana in 1765, Venezuela in 1776, the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata in 1782, Peru in 1784, and New Spain, Central America, and Chile in 1786–87.

By creating larger administrative units under intendants with enhanced authority, the Crown sought to make its power as effective in the countryside as in major cities and towns. Since the intendancies were too big for a single intendant to oversee directly, however, he was given subordinates who reported to him. Known as “subdelegates,” they replaced *corregidores* and *alcaldes mayores*; indeed, men who initially held the new positions included former district officials whose term in office had not expired. The number of subdelegates reporting to a given intendant varied. For example, the seven intendants named for Peru in 1784 were directly in charge of fifty-eight subdelegates. In New Spain, twelve intendants oversaw roughly 150 of them.

Intendants’ most important charge was supervising the collection of revenue. They were also responsible for public administration, finance, and justice, and military preparedness within their provinces. For example, they were to oversee the availability of provisions and the payment of salaries for the troops in their jurisdiction.

Almost exclusively, the Crown named peninsulars to these powerful, prestigious, and well-paid new positions. Many intendants were professional soldiers, but some were lawyers or treasury officials. They had secured their appointments by merit, not purchase, and—far more frequently than the earlier district officials—placed the royal interest above personal gain.

Despite Gálvez’s great hopes, the intendant system failed to yield the anticipated benefits. Although income rose substantially in Peru immediately after the system was introduced, but it then fell. In New Spain, revenues rose during the 1770s, before the introduction of the intendants, and then remained flat once they were in place. The intendant system also failed to provide superior administration and justice in the countryside because it was flawed at the district level.

The problem was the failure to pay adequate compensation to the subdelegates, who retained only a small percentage of the tribute they collected. They were also explicitly prohibited from using the *repartimiento* of merchandise (the forced sale of goods to native communities). The new officials soon protested these limitations to their income. When it became clear within a decade that stringent enforcement was impossible, many subdelegates returned to the old system of profiting from the sale of goods on credit and advances of raw materials and even cash to native communities.

The intendant system worked better in the provincial capitals than in the countryside. In urban settings, intendants often revitalized city councils by enlarging

their membership, often recruiting prominent peninsulars of the city, raising revenues, and improving public services. Better roads and bridges, streetlights, sanitation, and water supplies all increased civic pride. Implemented simultaneously with the Crown's discrimination against native sons, the native-born often relocated their political ambitions to other government institutions, especially municipal councils. These became the primary political arena for local grievances in many parts of the Spanish Empire.

Increasing Revenue

The Crown used royal revenue from the Americas in one of three ways: to pay expenses in the colony in which it was collected; to subsidize expenses in another colony; and to bolster the treasury in Spain. The transfer of colonial wealth to Spain played a key role in paying for court expenditures as well as funding the Spanish military and bureaucracy. It also helped pay for Spain's ambitious, but seldom successful, foreign policy objectives.

The colonies can be divided into three categories based on their revenues: surplus producers, those dependent on subsidies, and those that were self-sufficient. Colonies producing surplus revenue, of course, preferred to spend these revenues locally, but royal officials understood the importance of shifting resources, usually for defense, to other colonies as well as to the fiscal bottomless pit in Madrid. Under Habsburg rule, the two major surplus-producing regions were the silver mining centers of Upper Peru and New Spain. Throughout the eighteenth century, New Spain continued to subsidize the Philippine Islands, Cuba, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, Cumaná, Trinidad, Florida, and Louisiana. Peru, with fewer resources, continued to subsidize Panama and Chile until late in the century. Upper Peru had long sent funds to support the military garrison in Buenos Aires and, after the creation of the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata, increased its subsidy. Central America in the second half of the eighteenth century was self-sufficient, paying its own expenses but not subsidizing any other colony.

In his general visitation of New Spain, José de Gálvez set out to create significantly improved tax collection. Replacing most tax farming with an unprecedented number of better organized and more professional government officials greatly increased royal control and yielded substantially higher revenues. The state took direct control of long-established and new monopolies, including tobacco, blasting powder, and mercury. It also established profitable state lotteries.

In the 1770s, royal revenues in New Spain increased almost 50 percent from those collected in the 1760s, reaching a sum nearly five times larger than that received in the 1690s. This spurt of revenue resulted from the Crown's imposition of new taxes, the increased rate of some established levies, and direct collection of the sales tax (*alcabala*). Revenues almost doubled again by the 1790s, the peak decade for "normal" income. Improved mining production, increased commercial volume, shifts from tax farming to direct collection by royal officials, and a growing population all helped fuel this remarkable growth in revenues. Nevertheless, even as revenues reached new levels, the viceregal government fell deeper into debt.

In Peru, the first sign of real growth in royal income occurred in the 1760s, when sales tax revenue more than doubled. A growing native population and a more effective bureaucracy led to increased tribute collection as well. In addition, among other new levies, the Viceroy of Peru imposed a 12.5 percent duty on brandy in 1777, and in 1780 the sales tax was increased from 4 to 6 percent.

These tax measures provoked rioting and other forms of protest that led to temporarily suspended collection. However, the taxes were later reestablished and in the 1780s revenues reached their highest level of the century. Nevertheless, New Spain, not Peru, proved the more reliable source of funds for the Spanish treasury, remitting over 90 million pesos in public revenue from 1761 to 1800, while Peru's treasury sent none.

The once-dynamic mining colony of Upper Peru or Charcas performed relatively poorly. Revenue fell 70 percent between the 1680s and the 1740s but then rose in the reform period, from the 1770s through the years 1800–09. Based on increased silver production, population growth, tighter fiscal oversight, and higher tax rates, this late expansion meant, nonetheless, that revenues at the beginning of the nineteenth century were scarcely 20 percent higher than in the 1680s. This was a small premium indeed given the scale of the Spanish reform initiative.

Revenues in the Río de la Plata increased under the intendants, but this was the first concentrated attempt to capture the region's fiscal potential. Opening up the port of Buenos Aires under the "free trade within the empire" policy in 1778 had an immediate effect on customs duties. Never greater than 20,000 pesos before 1777, income rose to nearly 54,000 pesos in 1778 and averaged nearly 400,000 pesos a year in the early 1790s. Crown income then peaked at almost 1 million pesos in 1804. However, it was the subsidy from the treasury of Potosí and other Upper Peru treasuries that maintained this colony's solvency.

In 1750 Venezuela was arguably among Spain's most prosperous agricultural colonies. With its monopoly over the sale of cacao, the Caracas Company in many ways served as a surrogate administration for the Crown. The appointment of an intendant in 1776, however, made clear that the Crown was reasserting direct control over the production and expenditure of royal revenue. The creation of a tobacco monopoly in 1779 reinforced the new direction. In the 1780s and early 1790s, the colony was able to send to Spain annual treasury surpluses that reached 300,000 pesos.

CHURCH, STATE, AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The Church, Regalism, and the Expulsion of the Jesuits

The Church was much stronger in Peru and New Spain than in the historically poorer and less populous peripheral colonies. The relative poverty of Cuba, Venezuela, Chile, and the Río de la Plata limited the Church's influence on cultural life and politics until late in the colonial period. As a result, in these regions the Church was less able to compete with secular authorities, whose power grew as a result of reforms after 1750.

In the eighteenth century, the monarchs of Spain and Portugal followed a broad policy known as “regalism”—increasing their authority at the expense of other interests and institutions, notably the Catholic Church. Ferdinand VI expanded royal patronage over the secular clergy through a concordat or formal agreement with the pope in 1753. Charles III built on this base and further altered the balance between the formerly interdependent and equal partners of Crown and Church. Believing the latter’s jurisdiction should extend over laypersons only in matters of conscience, the Crown reduced ecclesiastical immunity, principally the privilege of asylum, and also reduced the personal legal protection that clerics enjoyed in many areas. The regular orders that had grown powerful during the first century of colonial rule became the regalists’ primary target.



Imperial reformers were concerned with improving public order and protecting property. In most large colonial cities, streets in the downtown areas were illuminated at night and patrolled by night watchmen.

In 1749 Ferdinand VI decreed that all parishes in Peru and New Spain still ministered by regular orders should be transferred to the secular clergy, priests not members of these orders. Four years later, he extended the reform to the remainder of the empire. Unlike a failed attempt to transfer parishes from friars to secular priests in the late sixteenth century, this new effort proved largely successful. By the mid-1760s in Mexico, for example, secular priests ministered in nearly every parish.

Charles III underscored his willingness to challenge ecclesiastical institutions in 1767 when, following earlier French and Portuguese actions, he expelled the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) from his realms. The immediate cause was a series of municipal riots in Spain in 1766, believed by some to have been influenced by the Jesuits. In addition, the Society had created powerful enemies at court, in part because its refusal to acknowledge monarchical authority as higher than papal authority defied regalist doctrine. Since expulsion would also provide an opportunity to appropriate the Society's wealth, the action proved irresistible to a monarch whose resources were stretched.

The expulsion affected more than 2,100 Jesuits on the American mainland. The total included over 650 from Mexico, 400 each from Peru and Paraguay, and 350 from Chile, with native sons a majority of the expelled priests. The action shocked colonial opinion. Rioting broke out in the mining region of New Spain, in Valladolid and Pátzcuaro, where workers were already dismayed by more stringent tax collection and the imposition of excise taxes on *pulque*. Visitor General José de Gálvez led a ruthless expedition to suppress these protests. In Peru and Chile the expulsion also provoked astonishment, but the Jesuits were deported without significant protest or violence.

This expulsion had enormous consequences in the Río de la Plata, for nowhere had the Society been more powerful than in its famous native reductions in Paraguay with approximately 80,000 Guaraní. To a regalist Crown, these reductions symbolized the Jesuits' arrogance and, more important, the political danger of their geographically concentrated power. The expulsion dramatically changed land and labor relations in Paraguay. In the following decades, subsistence agriculture that sustained indigenous communities declined while yerba and tobacco production for distant markets grew.

Following the expulsion, the Crown confiscated the Society's estates and other assets, including over seventy colleges spread from New Spain to Chile. In Peru the value of the 203 *haciendas* and over 5,200 slaves seized by Spanish authorities was approximately 6.5 million pesos. In less than a decade, over half of these assets had been sold. The Society's rural holdings alone in New Spain brought the Crown over 5 million pesos. Jesuit ranches and plantations, powerful economic actors in the peripheral colonies, were also sold to private individuals, given to rival orders, or run by local secular authorities. In the end this process of religious divestment helped to promote the general progress of market expansion in frontier zones and further reduced institutional constraints on the penetration of market values. This rapid transfer of property also created a local vested interest opposed to the Society's return.

The expulsion affected more than 250,000 Indians in Jesuit missions. Many of the missions were turned over to secular clergy, especially in New Spain. In South America the Franciscans assumed responsibility for a number of them. In Paraguay, the government appointed civil administrators to oversee the missions' temporal matters but assigned spiritual care to the Franciscan, Dominican, and Mercedarian orders. Everywhere, the former Jesuit missions declined economically. The Bourbon Reforms had costs, not just benefits, for the Crown.

While the expulsion of the Jesuits revealed explicitly the Crown's willingness to employ naked power against the religious orders, Charles III and his ministers also proved ready to attack the baroque display and high costs that characterized funerals, long a basis of ecclesiastical power and wealth. In 1787 the monarch ordered burials in suburban cemeteries rather than, as was customary, in or around churches.

Charles III and his advisors quickly discovered that, despite support from "enlightened" Catholics, the majority of the population opposed extramural burial. Its egalitarianism also offended members of the elite committed to a hierarchical society. Religious orders that benefited from the traditional burial fees also opposed the reform. Despite the claimed benefits for public health, extramural burial required decades to become generally accepted, a clear case of the Crown's inability to force reform on a traditional society.

The Church was the largest employer of professionals in the Indies. Native-son clerics had long dominated its parishes and, although constrained by the forced rotation in office, were prominent in the mendicant orders. They also sought upper offices in the ecclesiastical structure. In the mid-eighteenth century, native sons and other creoles were well represented in cathedral chapters, but their level of representation declined in some bishoprics in the 1770s as the Crown explicitly favored peninsulars for appointments.

The Crown named native sons to bishoprics less frequently than to the cathedral chapters. Although creoles in 1750 held nearly two thirds of the bishoprics, only nine of the twenty-one were native sons. While new bishoprics were created between 1751 and 1808, the number of creole bishops declined to ten, including only three native sons. With peninsulars receiving almost three quarters of appointments to bishoprics during these years, irritation among locally born priests grew as they experienced increased discrimination.

Using the enhanced patronage obtained in the concordat of 1753, the Crown named numerous bishops and archbishops who supported regalism. These prelates, in turn, worked to reform convents by banishing excesses of every kind. In the 1760s and early 1770s, both the bishop of Puebla and the archbishop of Mexico vigorously tried to force communal life (for example, eating meals together, and restrictions on the nuns' right to control their personal expenses) on convents in their jurisdictions. Although up-to-date regalists, they rejected the growing view of Spanish intellectuals that women were both rational and equal. Instead, they were condescending toward females in general and insisted on the obedience of female religious to male authority. Many also held the popular European belief that, by virtue of birth in the Indies, creoles exhibited a variety of failings.

Nunneries with numerous native-born and other creole women bore the brunt of these initiatives to force their mandatory participation in communal life. In general, daughters of prominent New Spain families who dominated many convents resisted the proposed reform. Prestigious and powerful, these nuns of the black veil (higher-status nuns) had selected their convents in large measure because of their social status and reputation for providing a comfortable life. They owned their living quarters, enjoyed the services of personal servants and slaves, ate what they wanted, and oversaw their personal expenditures. They saw no appeal in losing these pleasures to share a dormitory, eat less desirable meals in common, receive fewer services, and fill assignments formerly provided by lower-class lay sisters.

The conflict finally reached Charles III. In 1774 he gave black veil nuns the opportunity to accept or decline the communal life. A minority located in the city of Guadalajara and a few other places supported the more stringent lifestyle. The professed nuns in the Archbishopric of Mexico vented their displeasure most emphatically; all 601 voted against imposing communal life. The existing nuns of the black veil thus retained their privileges and perquisites, but those who followed were to accept the more stringent terms of communal life. By the end of the century, however, this stricture had lost its force and observance of communal life in the convents had ended.

The Enlightenment

The expulsion of the Jesuits deprived the colonies of many of their most prominent educators and intellectuals. At the same time, the expulsion removed strong advocates of scholastic thought and thus facilitated the widespread introduction of a more modern approach to knowledge introduced in Europe through the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment. By the close of the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment's emphasis on skepticism of authority, observation of nature, experimentation, and analysis based on inductive reasoning had transformed the colonies' intellectual milieu.

Even before 1767, glimmers were present in the colonies of an unmistakable swing toward these more modern approaches to knowledge and a new emphasis on science and technology. Nearly all of the great works of philosophical speculation, political and economic inquiry, and natural science were ultimately known and circulated in the major cities of the Indies. Despite the official hostility of Church and state to many of the most important Enlightenment authors, priests and royal administrators were among those persons most likely to own and lend forbidden works. European and American travelers, participants in scientific expeditions, and technological advisers sent to the colonies also acted as intermediaries in this intellectual revolution. Sailors and merchants from the newly independent United States contributed to this process by distributing potentially subversive tracts on republicanism. The best-known supporters of Enlightenment ideas, a small minority of educated urban elites, were active in the 1780s and 1790s. Their intellectual heirs sustained their reform agenda and, after 1810, added

the political enthusiasms of the American and French revolutions to the legacy of Enlightenment thought.

As educated colonials examined economic questions, some came to consider the Spanish commercial system itself as an obstacle to progress. Monopolies, special privileges, and restrictions on foreign trade—the very economic structure of empire—were attacked publicly. The penetration of new ideas was advanced by the creation of secular organizations devoted to the twin totems of the new age: reason and progress. By the 1790s, economic societies had been established in Lima as well as many of the largest cities of the empire's periphery: Buenos Aires, Havana, Caracas, Guatemala, and Bogotá. Committed to promoting economic progress, these bodies typically published weekly journals that supported education, technological innovation, and broadened commercial relations.

In Buenos Aires in 1809 the native-son lawyer Mariano Moreno marshaled the economic liberalism of Adam Smith on behalf of free trade, condemning Spain's trade monopoly as an impediment to prosperity. Freemasons were also active in many peripheral cities, including Havana and Buenos Aires. More explicitly political than the economic societies and organized in secret groups that led naturally to the conspiratorial style, the Freemasons later provided many leaders of the independence movements. Often their members were drawn from local elites tied to the export sector.

The most widespread expression of enlightened ideas in Peru appeared in the *Mercurio Peruano*, a biweekly paper published in Lima in the early 1790s. Through the *Mercurio*, both male and female supporters of progress sought to provide Peruvians with useful knowledge of their region and information relevant to their daily lives. Although its publication demonstrated the presence of self-proclaimed adherents of modern ideas, the *Mercurio's* demise in 1795 reflected how small their number was. At no time did the number of active subscribers reach 400.

In New Spain the foremost Mexican publicist, cleric José Antonio Alzate y Ramírez (1729–99), advocated scientific knowledge and its application to contemporary problems. His *Gaceta de Literatura* (1788–95) provided a stream of informative articles on medicine, applied science, agronomy, and a host of other scientific topics. Like writers of the *Mercurio Peruano*, Alzate focused on the vice-royalty of his birth and wrote articles intended to improve it.

Accompanying and further accelerating the spread of modern ideas in the colonies were Crown-sponsored scientific expeditions. For example, the decade-long botanical expedition of Hipólito Ruiz and José Antonio Pavón was sent to Peru in 1778 to collect samples and make drawings of plants that would enhance the Royal Botanical Garden in Madrid or be of medicinal value. A similar expedition was initiated in New Spain in 1787.

These imperial initiatives helped foster local efforts to engage the new era of experimentation. Colonial universities, while often resistant to change, hosted some innovations, as did some freestanding institutions dedicated to specific fields of study. The Royal Academy of San Carlos, opened in Mexico City in 1784, taught painting, sculpture, and architecture. In 1788 a chair of botany and a botanical

garden were established at the University of Mexico to foster the study of the colony's unique botanical heritage. The creation of the Royal College of Mines followed in 1792, the first mining school in the Western Hemisphere.

Although efforts to establish a school of mines in Peru failed, in the late 1780s the viceroyalty hosted an expedition of European mining experts sent by the Spanish king and led by the Swedish baron Thaddeus von Nordenflicht. Part of a royal effort to introduce the latest European mining techniques, these experts labored from 1789 to 1810 without notable success. A similar expedition led by the Basque Fausto de Elhuyar, who was trained at Europe's finest mining centers, reached New Spain in 1788. Both missions confirmed the Crown's willingness to encourage experimentation and the initiation of new methods for utilitarian ends.

POPULATION GROWTH AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Demographic Changes

Populations grew throughout the Western world during the second half of the eighteenth century. The Spanish colonies shared in this demographic expansion, their populations increasing rapidly between 1750 and 1850. Overall, the colonial population expanded at the rate of 0.8 percent per year, roughly twice the rate of contemporary Europe. As a group, the peripheral colonies experienced the most rapid growth in the Indies. Venezuela, for example, increased from an estimated 330,000 inhabitants in 1780 to 780,000 in 1800. Chile grew from 184,000 in 1775 to 583,000 in 1810.

New Spain and Peru shared in this general growth, although at substantially different rates and with significant regional variations. Internal migration affected both viceroyalties, but neither, unlike Brazil or Cuba, to cite extreme cases, was a significant participant in the eighteenth-century Atlantic slave trade or received large numbers of immigrants from Europe. Rather, natural increase was primarily responsible for the population of New Spain rising between 1742 and 1810 from about 3.3 million to perhaps 6.1 million inhabitants. This impressive upward trend occasionally suffered reverses, most notably in 1785–86, when an estimated 300,000 persons died as a result of a catastrophic harvest failure and attendant epidemics. Growth was particularly rapid in the regions north and west of Mexico City. Northern New Spain had 26 percent of the viceroyalty's population in 1742 and 38 percent by 1810. The largest city in this region, Guadalajara, more than tripled in population from 1750 to 1810, largely as a result of migration from surrounding rural areas. Mexico City was also a magnet for internal migrants, growing from 113,000 in 1793 to 137,000 in 1803.

The population of Peru reached its low point in the early 1720s as a result of a series of devastating epidemics. Recovery was well under way by 1750, however, and, except for a temporary contraction initiated by a series of indigenous rebellions in the 1780s, the population grew for the remainder of the colonial era. The census of 1792 listed 1,076,122 inhabitants. By 1812, natural increase, particularly

within the Indian population, and territorial reorganization brought the colony's total to about 1.5 million.

Breaking down the population totals in both colonies reveals the substantial increase in the mixed-race and white populations. In the mid-seventeenth century, *castas* made up a little over 5 percent and Indians some 86 percent of the population of New Spain. Despite an actual increase in numbers, Indians had dropped to about 74 percent of the total population by the 1740s and to only about 60 percent by the close of the eighteenth century. The population considered white grew to 18 percent, and *castas*, with 22 percent, emerged as the second largest socioracial group in the viceroyalty. The 1792 census indicated that Peru had similar distributions of Spaniards (13 percent), Indians (56 percent), and *castas* (27 percent). Although the slave population in New Spain was negligible, Peru had over 40,000 black and mulatto slaves (4 percent); most resided in the intendency of Lima.

The white population, both Spaniards and creoles, was concentrated in or near major cities and towns in both New Spain and Peru. According to contemporary accounts, Mexico City's 67,500 whites constituted roughly half of its total population in 1803. Immigrant Spaniards, almost all males, numbered only 2,359 in the early 1790s. Both Guanajuato and Antequera had over a third of their population classified as Spaniards, the census term for whites, but only 314 adult males in Guanajuato and 274 in Antequera were actually born in Spain. In Peru, the majority of "whites" lived in cities and relatively few were peninsulars. The three provinces of Lima, Arequipa, and Cuzco alone hosted 42 percent of the viceroyalty's total Spanish population in 1792.

Unlike in New Spain and Peru, increased immigration played a central role in population growth in the peripheral colonies in the eighteenth century, especially after 1762. Attracted by the increased vitality of the Río de la Plata's economy, for example, more than 1,300 licensed emigrants left Spain for Buenos Aires and Montevideo between 1765 and 1807; the actual number of immigrants, however, was almost certainly much greater. While the expansion of civil administration and the military forces attracted some of these immigrants, most found employment outside the public sector. Trade remained a magnet, and after 1780 85 percent of wholesale merchants and a majority of retailers in Buenos Aires were peninsulars.

Declining mortality rates also contributed to population growth. Although in New Granada the number of natives kept falling until the end of the colonial period, in general the indigenous population of the peripheral regions began to grow in the late seventeenth century. Because they remained more vulnerable to epidemic disease than other groups and were also more likely to be victims of violence, the growth rates for most indigenous groups remained modest. In the frontier zones of Chile, in the Río de la Plata region, and along the Brazilian border, slave raids and conflicts with settlers disrupted indigenous family life and depressed fertility. Where peace and a stable agricultural regime could be established, however, native populations grew steadily after 1750.

The flow of enslaved Africans dwarfed European immigration to Spanish America. Between 1761 and 1810, colonists imported over 300,000 African slaves;

most entered the labor force of peripheral colonies. The Cuban economy rested increasingly on sugar production, and as a result slavery expanded rapidly into the nineteenth century. In 1760 the island was home to approximately 35,000 slaves, and the sugar estates in the region of Havana averaged 45 slaves each. Beginning with Britain's promotion of slave imports during its occupation of Havana in 1762, sugar production soared, as did slave importation. After Spain reasserted control, colonial authorities found it necessary to remove most of the obstacles that had previously limited slave imports. As a result, between 1751 and 1825, 293,400 slaves entered the Cuban workforce.

In response to a bigger but more competitive international market for cacao and the profitable introduction of tobacco, coffee, and sugar cultivation, Venezuela received significantly more slaves as well. Because the colony depended heavily on the contraband trade in slaves reexported by the British in Jamaica and the Dutch in Curaçao, the commonly accepted import estimate of 30,000 slaves between 1774 and 1810 understates the actual volume. In 1810 the bishopric of Caracas alone had 64,462 slaves and 197,738 free blacks, out of a total population of 427,203.

The Río de la Plata region proved inhospitable to the development of plantation agriculture. Nonetheless, customs records indicate a dramatic rise in slave imports after the creation of the new viceroyalty, reaching its peak in the last two decades of the colonial era. At least 45,000 slaves entered the port of Buenos Aires between 1790 and 1810. The majority labored on the farms and ranches of the pampas or entered the urban labor force. Many slaves were in domestic service, whereas others provided much of the artisan and transportation workforce. Those slaves not absorbed into the growing economy of Buenos Aires and its hinterland were sold in the interior, especially to the miners of Potosí.

Societies

An expanded population and the growth of mining production, trade, and commercial agriculture in New Spain after 1750 increased the growing gulf between rich and poor. Those families who owned estates that sold wheat, corn, meat, *pulque*, and other products to expanding urban markets, and those who owned silver mines or invested in successful wholesale trade achieved unprecedented prosperity. In the late eighteenth century, about one hundred families in Mexico City, and perhaps ten elsewhere in the viceroyalty, had assets of approximately 1 million pesos or more. Their immense fortunes, rather than titles or other honors, separated them from the other members of a larger elite of lesser landowners, mine owners, merchants, and high-ranking bureaucrats and ecclesiastics. Unable to enter their ranks through marriage or to compete with them economically, members of this lower elite were joined to their superiors by shared business interests and a common aversion to the lower orders. The great families owned numerous estates in different regions of New Spain, both as protection against natural disasters and as collateral in a society based heavily on credit. They integrated their agricultural investments by controlling the processing and marketing



Because so many colonial residents were illiterate, every town or city had professional letter writers. This is one of the many letter writers who worked in the central plaza of Mexico City.

of goods produced on their estates, and they attempted to dominate the marketing of imported goods in regions in which they held properties. Although Lima had more titled nobles than Mexico City, there were only a handful of millionaires. Guatemala, on the other hand, could boast but one recently titled noble, while Buenos Aires had none.

At the opposite end of the socioeconomic spectrum, a growing underclass was evident in New Spain. Access to adequate agricultural land to sustain a family became more difficult as the villages' expanding populations exceeded their resources and as inheritance ultimately divided farmers' rural properties into parcels insufficient for subsistence. Consequently, a flow of migrants from the countryside sought a better life in the cities. As the largest city in the empire, Mexico City, not surprisingly, had the most numerous underclass, with an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 homeless persons living on the streets. During periods of economic crisis or famine, the city's destitute may have constituted a third or more of its

population. Unskilled workers found permanent employment difficult to obtain and usually were forced to look for work each day. With urban wages remaining nearly static during the eighteenth century and prices increasing after 1775, the plight of the poor worsened. With a much smaller base population and a slower rate of growth after 1720, Peru was spared the demographic pressure on land that caused such suffering in areas of Mexico. Lima's population experienced only modest change from the 1740s to the 1840s, hovering between 50,000 and 60,000 inhabitants. Although a gulf between a small, wealthy white elite and a large, poor working class had long been present, Peru did not experience the rapid expansion of a large impoverished underclass. Nevertheless, as in New Spain, gross inequality and grinding poverty were common.

A small but highly visible number of peninsulars constituted the major exception to the general pattern of downward social mobility. The most successful arrived in the New World to work as business apprentices for peninsular uncles or other kinsmen. After years of training and forgoing marriage, the most promising wed cousins or the daughters of business associates, joined their fathers-in-law's enterprises, and prospered. The wealthiest peninsulars used international trade as the basis for their fortunes but usually diversified as quickly as possible by investing in rural properties and other real estate. In New Spain, Antonio de Bassoco, a Basque merchant and investor in mines, agriculture, and loans, parlayed his father-in-law's legacy of 250,000 pesos in 1763 into a fortune of 2.6 million pesos by the time of his own death in 1814. In Lima, the Navarrese millionaire Pedro de Abadía invested in international trade, agriculture, and mining. Peninsulars were also active merchants in the provinces. Juan Crisóstomo Goyeneche, another Navarrese, reached Arequipa in 1769; married a woman from a prominent local family; diversified his investments in commerce, mining, and agriculture; held a local office; and ultimately became the patriarch of the city's most prominent family. Native sons participated in trade as well, both in the provinces and in the viceregal capitals, but were seldom among the most successful merchants.

Similar patterns existed in the peripheral colonies, but the loosening of commercial restrictions and administrative and territorial reforms attracted a new wave of Spanish merchants to their ports and capital cities. Peninsulars increasingly dominated the merchant elites of Buenos Aires, Caracas, Santiago, and Havana as they did Veracruz and Callao. In Buenos Aires, Tomás Antonio Romero grew wealthy from the mercury trade to Potosí and the importation of slaves. His contemporary, Gaspar de Santa Coloma, imported European goods and exported silver as a commission agent for Spanish commercial houses and also independently on his own account. As was common among wholesale merchants, both men provided credit to local producers and retailers. In Caracas, men like Domingo Zulueta and Juan Bautista Echezuría extended large amounts of credit to planters. Although peninsular merchants provided market intelligence, transportation and warehouse services, and essential credit, their social position and economic power ultimately rested on the dependable functioning of Spain's Atlantic lifeline.

In Venezuela and Cuba in particular, immigrant merchants married into rural elites. Many also invested directly in plantations and ranches so that by the end of their careers they were indistinguishable from wealthy native sons. In Chile and New Granada, merchants and civil administrators forged lasting business and social ties. By the 1790s, merchants' fortunes were among the largest in these colonies, and the relative liquidity of their wealth gave them disproportionate economic influence.

New opportunities created by the expanding markets provided a fertile environment for the development of new rural elites—cacao planters in Venezuela, cattlemen in the Río de la Plata, yerba growers in Paraguay, wheat farmers in Chile, and sugar planters in Cuba. Most of the members of these new elites were “new men” from modest provincial backgrounds. Their ranches, plantations, and farms were located away from the traditional urban centers, and this geographic dispersal and fragmentation of wealth and social power had important consequences in the period after independence.

The dominant cities of the peripheral colonies, as in New Spain and Peru, attracted artisans and lesser-skilled immigrants as well as merchants and bureaucrats. But in this expansive era, immigrants sought to escape manual labor by purchasing and training slaves or recruiting free *casta* apprentices. Nevertheless, the arrival of assertive new immigrants often led to bitter conflicts with the native-born. In Buenos Aires, for example, such conflicts led guilds of silversmiths and shoemakers to fail in the 1790s. In some cities underpaid Spanish soldiers from local garrisons sought jobs in the civilian economy, undercutting wages and competing for employment. Although their absolute number was limited, the immigrants' visibility and assertiveness helped promote creole patriotism among the urban masses.

The slave trade affected social relations in all of the peripheral colonies. This tragic commerce alleviated chronic labor problems and helped unleash the economic potential previously held in check by the fleet system. Yet the influx of African slaves also led to racial and cultural conflicts and further reduced the prestige of manual labor. In every occupation in which slave labor became important, both income and status tended to decline significantly. As a result, interpersonal violence, attacks on property, and other antisocial behavior developed an implicitly racial as well as class character.

By the end of the eighteenth century the peripheral societies generally were more racially and culturally heterogeneous than they had been fifty years earlier. There was more social and geographic mobility: where the slave trade had expanded, there was greater racial consciousness, more miscegenation, and a proliferation of ambiguously defined social types.

COLONIAL ECONOMIES IN THE REFORM ERA

The economies of Spain's colonies expanded and became more diverse in the era of the Caroline reforms. Some of this momentum resulted from a broad expansion of the Atlantic economy. As Europe entered the first stage of the Industrial Revolution,

manufacturing and long-distance trade increased, deepening the continent's connections with the Americas, Africa, and Southeast Asia. There were, however, some unique elements in the Spanish Empire's economic expansion. A dramatic improvement in silver production in New Spain and the Andean region was one key to this growth. As silver production rose, it paid for increased imports from Spain, generated additional demand for locally produced goods, and helped to monetize commercial transactions. An empire-wide demographic recovery also contributed to economic growth as these larger populations required additional goods and services. Spain's administrative and fiscal reforms were influential as well, but their effects had dramatically different consequences from colony to colony.

“Free Trade Within the Empire”

Under consideration for some years, commercial reform labeled “free trade within the empire” began slowly only in 1765. After experimentally opening Cuba and several other Caribbean islands to direct commerce with Spain, the Crown extended the new policy to Louisiana and other minor colonies. Then, in 1778, most of the remaining colonies were permitted to trade directly with an expanded number of Spanish ports. The Crown finally allowed New Spain and Venezuela to enter the “free trade” zone in 1789. Reductions in duties and the removal of many restrictions on intercolonial commerce opened up trade further. During a decade of peace from 1783 to 1793, the value of colonial exports sent to Spain probably doubled and perhaps increased more. Conflict with England beginning in 1796 forced a permanent alteration in trading patterns.

Spanish exports also rose as colonials purchased Spanish products that included printed cottons, linens, silks, and other textiles manufactured in Catalonia and other peninsular locations; agricultural goods, especially brandy (*aguardiente*) as well as wine, olives, figs, and nuts; and a variety of other goods. Merchandise that included endless varieties of textiles that originated in other European countries was also reexported from Cádiz and other peninsular ports in large quantity.

While the merchant elites of New Spain and Peru struggled to maintain their influence in the new era of “free trade,” traders in the new viceroyalties of New Granada and Río de la Plata grew richer and more influential. The economies of these new viceroyalties were also stimulated by greatly expanded public-sector spending as the Spanish government funded larger military garrisons and augmented civilian bureaucracies. Among the cities benefiting most from these administrative and military reforms were Havana, Buenos Aires, Caracas, and Bogotá.

Peru, located on the Pacific coast, could not benefit fully from reforms that privileged Atlantic trade. Nevertheless, under the new trading system, this colony imported a flood of European products, a growing proportion of which were of Spanish origin. With silver production recovering in the late eighteenth century, Peru was able to remain Spain's most valuable trading partner after Mexico. Between 1785 and 1796, the Pacific ports of South America received about 22 percent of all exports sent to America from Cádiz. While this influx of textiles and other goods reduced prices for consumers and promoted commercial activity, their lower prices undercut

the market for local *obraje*-produced cloth. As in Peru, the volume of Mexican trade always depended heavily on silver production. Increased silver mined in the late eighteenth century purchased more imported goods. As a result, about 36 percent of all Spanish exports to the Americas reached New Spain via Cádiz.

Without a doubt, Spain's American empire was very different in 1800 from the empire of 1700. While the Caribbean, the Río de la Plata, and New Granada were strategically important before 1750, the silver-producing vicerealties of New Spain and Peru had contributed most of Spain's colonial revenues and served as key destinations for Spanish commerce. By 1800 Cuban sugar and tobacco, hides from the Río de la Plata, cacao from Venezuela, and other agricultural exports had gained a profitable place in Atlantic trade and contributed significant revenues to the Spanish Crown. Although New Spain and Peru remained Spain's richest colonies, the rise and fall of silver production in these colonies no longer completely defined the fortunes of the empire.

Silver and Gold Production

Silver was always the major export from New Spain and Peru. Registered silver production in New Spain increased dramatically between 1710 and 1810, with only a single downturn in the 1760s owing to a shortage of mercury. In the twenty-year period from 1791 to 1810, for example, Mexico contributed a remarkable 55 percent of the world's total silver production. The most spectacular single year was 1804, when it produced over 25 million pesos.

Approximately 10 large mines, each with over 1,000 workers and a capital investment of more than 1 million pesos, dominated the Mexican mining industry. The largest mine, the Valenciana, had more than 3,000 workers. In some years its owners, the newly titled counts of Valenciana, received profits of over 1 million pesos. The combination of Mexico's rich natural endowment of silver ore, the effects of late colonial improvements in technology and organization, increased capital investment, and more favorable fiscal policies explain this colony's domination of international production.

Despite the inclusion of Potosí and the rest of what is now Bolivia into the new Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, silver production in Peru increased until the early nineteenth century. Much of this expansion depended on increased supplies of mercury from Spain. In contrast with New Spain, Peru's mining was characterized by numerous small-scale, undercapitalized enterprises averaging scarcely a dozen employees per mine. Nevertheless, the combined registered silver production of Peru and Upper Peru grew substantially by the end of the eighteenth century. In New Granada, the registered production of gold more than doubled between 1750 to 1800.

The Economies of New Spain and Peru

While average annual silver production of the mines of Mexico and Peru approximately doubled between 1760 and 1800, the tens of millions of pesos in new wealth extracted from the mines had surprisingly little effect on the economy of

either colony. There is no doubt that higher silver production increased the wealth of mine owners and marginally improved the incomes of laborers in mining communities. It also benefited the fiscal balance sheets of Spain and the two viceregal governments. Mining profits paid for increased importation of European goods as well as increased consumption of locally produced products like food, rough textiles, and household goods. There is little indication, however, that wages rose or diets improved generally in either New Spain or Peru.

More important still for longer-term economic development, this substantial increase in mineral wealth did not pay for improvements in infrastructure or education or significant technological innovation. At a time when new technologies and massive new investments in infrastructure were transforming English manufacturing and trade, transformations soon imitated in Western Europe and the newly independent United States, most manufacturing in Mexico and Peru continued to depend on hand tools and most goods continued to be transported by mules or llamas or in primitive carts on unimproved roads. Spanish efforts to promote the export of its own textiles and other manufactures by opposing the development of colonial manufacturing played an important role in retarding modernization and diversification.

Most of the wealth generated by the dramatic increase in silver production was captured by colonial taxes and fees or repatriated to Spain in the form of profits earned by resident Spanish merchants and miners. In the case of Mexico some 500 to 600 million pesos were exported from public and private accounts in the 50 years before 1810, a cash hemorrhage that would have left few funds behind for local investment. One measure of the efficiency of these extractive mechanisms is that while silver production doubled in New Spain, many localities in the colony lacked adequate silver coinage to conduct market transactions. The Peruvian case is less well known, but clearly little investment in technology, infrastructure, or education occurred there as well.

The glitter of precious metals should not obscure the continued importance of agricultural and pastoral production in New Spain and Peru. Although mines produced prodigious quantities of wealth, many more colonial residents worked in agriculture and the grazing industry than in mining, and much of this production was for subsistence, not the market. Because transportation was difficult and expensive, supplies and prices of food and other necessities commonly had a local character in the colonies. Since even the largest cities and richest mining centers relied on the production of nearby farms and ranches for their food, little incentive existed for investments in new agricultural technologies or in crop or livestock improvements.

For example, in 1810, the grazing and agricultural sectors produced a larger share of New Spain's gross domestic product than did mining. Livestock alone provided about 30 percent of GDP (gross domestic product). Large-scale producers, some with herds of cattle and sheep in excess of 100,000 head, dominated this sector. Few of these ranchers in northern Mexico, however, had the capacity to send cattle, mules, and sheep 500 to 600 miles to Mexico City, Puebla, and other central Mexican markets. With the exception of times of famine, when prices rose

to extraordinary levels, high transportation costs precluded large-scale agriculturalists from seeking profit in distant markets. The inefficiencies of this colony's markets exacerbated the effects of periodic crop failures. As a result, it experienced after 1780 a protracted period of high staple prices that punished the poorest members of society.

The problems facing farmers and livestock raisers in New Spain were compounded in Peru by the region's mountainous topography and lower levels of urbanization. In contrast with New Spain, Peru's agricultural and grazing sectors had fewer large-scale producers, and indigenous communities were often active participants in supplying food crops and livestock to urban markets. While flocks of sheep and herds of cattle were small in comparison with those in Mexico, ownership was more dispersed. Unlike the great landowners of northern Mexico, Peruvian producers rarely sent their animals more than sixty miles because of higher transportation costs and smaller markets. Few domestic products in Peru enjoyed prices high enough to warrant shipment to distant markets.

The Economies of the Peripheral Colonies

A key component of the late colonial economic surge in peripheral colonies—the Río de la Plata, Chile, Venezuela, New Granada, and Cuba—was the expanded silver production in Mexico and the Andes discussed above. As more silver flowed through the Spanish fiscal system and across the trade routes of the empire, it stimulated production and generated new commercial linkages. Increased monetization propelled the expansion of the market economy relative to that of the subsistence sector, a process crucial to peripheral colonies where cash markets and wage labor had earlier lagged far behind levels in New Spain and Peru.

A second key to the peripheral colonies' growing economic importance was the "free trade" initiative. This reform shortened shipping times to Spanish and other European markets significantly and linked for the first time colonial markets like Buenos Aires and Havana. At the same time peripheral colonies deepened their commercial ties to Spain; some, like Venezuela, also expanded their illegal commercial relationships with Spain's rivals, especially the English and the Dutch.

The creation of state-run tobacco monopolies had dramatic and unforeseen consequences in the peripheral colonies. Once imposed, the monopolies limited legal tobacco production, set prices, processed and manufactured tobacco products, and controlled retail sales. Even though consumer demand in the colonies and in Europe pushed upward, tobacco growers gained only limited benefits. Consumers also found these poor person's luxuries increasingly expensive. The Crown, however, earned heady profits. Because the monopoly paid cash, the tobacco-producing regions of Venezuela, New Granada, and especially Paraguay were able to develop new commercial relations with regional and even international markets.

The most spectacular example of economic expansion after 1760 occurred in Cuba. During the brief British occupation, Havana and its surrounding agricultural region responded hastily to the influx of cheap slave labor, commercial credit, and a ready sugar market. Although Spanish sovereignty was soon reestablished,

the liberalized trade laws and tax breaks had already stimulated sugar production. The now-dynamic sugar sector continued to grow, pushing aside tobacco and other agricultural rivals. Between 1759 and 1789, the number of sugar mills tripled, and overall production grew nearly eightfold. Then in 1791 the slave rebellion in Haiti drove up world sugar prices and further accelerated the growth of Cuban production.

Both New Granada and Venezuela saw a substantial increase in exports, as well as some general economic expansion, but neither matched the incredible performance of Cuba. In the district of Antioquia in New Granada, registered gold production increased about ninefold from 1750 to 1800. Imports followed the same upward curve, increasing fivefold between 1760 and 1800. Trade with Spain and taxation, however, removed much of this bullion from the colony's economy. Gold contributed nearly 90 percent of New Granada's average of 2 million pesos in annual exports in the last decades of colonial rule. Instead of stimulating significant real growth, the increased gold production brought inflation and helped finance imports, especially textiles that competed with local manufacture. New taxes and monopolies wrung additional consumer demand out of the economy.

Venezuela followed a trajectory similar to that of Cuba. The creation of the monopoly Caracas Company in 1728 had provided the colony with both a commercial link to Spain and a source of capital. As cacao cultivation spread, slave imports increased. Competition from other cacao producers in the late eighteenth century led Venezuelan growers to diversify into other exportable products. Livestock raising became a major industry that sent thousands of mules to the British, Dutch, and French sugar colonies of the Caribbean in exchange for slaves and European manufactures. Tobacco production increased after the creation of the state monopoly, but colonial export restrictions limited the potential for growth. Exports of coffee, indigo, and sugar all went up after 1780.

Chile was less affected by imperial reform and the development of the Atlantic market than were the colonies located along the dynamic Caribbean Basin or in the Río de la Plata region. Still, between mid-century and 1800 the value of Chile's mining production more than doubled, to approximately 1 million pesos a year, and silver, gold, and copper became important exports. Wheat exports to Peru, a mainstay of the economy, continued to grow after 1750.

The Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata was a great success story. By opening Buenos Aires to direct trade with Spain and other Spanish colonies and by linking the mines of Potosí to this port, the Spanish government provided the fiscal and monetary resources necessary to energize the region's long-dormant agricultural and grazing potential. Hide exports rose from 150,000 at mid-century to a high of 1.5 million in 1786 and averaged 1 million until 1806. Dried beef and lard exports also increased significantly. By 1810 the combined effects of Buenos Aires's expanding population and the capital resources of its wholesale merchants made the city both the undisputed center of an integrated regional commercial system and an *entrepôt* for the Atlantic economy, surpassed only by Vera Cruz and Callao-Lima in volume and value of commerce.

Unlike the bullion-based commercial system of the Habsburg era, the agricultural export economies promoted by the Bourbon Reforms in the peripheral colonies could not wait out the disruption of the Atlantic trade. As a result, colonial producers sought and developed new markets outside the legal commercial system. The United States, Britain's Caribbean colonies, and Britain itself replaced or supplemented old markets and further promoted exports of tropical products as well as bullion.

PROTEST AND INSURRECTIONS

The many violent popular uprisings during the late colonial period were not consciously connected with the intellectual ferment of the Enlightenment, and most of their leaders used the language of traditional Spanish law and Catholic theology to justify their actions. As a result, most historians also distinguish these events from the later struggles for independence.

Popular violence and mob actions provoked generally by administrative corruption, new taxes, and high prices were common from the early seventeenth century onward. Royal officials were often targets for public frustration. In fact, competition and disagreement among civil bureaucrats, clergy, and their supporters repeatedly ignited violence and defined political objectives. In the eighteenth century, however, the scale and duration of violent uprisings increased, and the most important of them more directly challenged Spanish authorities.

The Bourbons' administrative and fiscal reforms provoked in part this change in the political character of popular protest. New taxes or the more efficient collection of old ones provoked bitter protest in many colonies. This was especially true when these fiscal burdens pushed up the price of basic consumer goods. The creation of private- and public-sector monopolies—the tobacco monopoly and the Caracas Company, for example—also led to litigation, protest, and, in some cases, rebellion. This occurred because the Spanish fiscal reform had transferred the colonial tax burden away from the mining sector and Atlantic trade to articles of common consumption that directly affected the popular classes.

In 1749 cacao producers in Venezuela rebelled against the Caracas Company's heavy-handed monopoly. Led by Juan Francisco de León, an immigrant from the Canary Islands, cacao growers resented the company's imposition of below-market prices and its inefficient provisioning of essential imports. More specifically, efforts by the company to prevent English and Dutch contraband threatened to force a further decline in prices. Although the rebels gained the initial advantage, they disbanded their military force when a new governor promised remediation. After nearly two years of tense stalemate, the arrival of military reinforcements permitted Spanish authorities to arrest and exile the most prominent rebel leaders and to reestablish the company's monopoly in a limited form.

Against a background of protracted decline of the local textile industry that adversely affected the whole of society, members of Quito's elite and popular classes united in violent protest in 1765 and forced the government to withdraw a program intended to increase taxes and collect them more aggressively. The coalition

soon split on class and ethnic lines, however, and, in an atmosphere of fear and mistrust, all sides welcomed the arrival of royal troops in 1766. Lingering plebeian mistrust doomed an elite rebellion in 1809.

Fifteen years later Spanish authorities in New Granada were confronted by a more threatening popular political protest. To pay for the defense of the colony against possible English attack, colonial authorities increased the *alcabala*, raised tobacco and brandy prices, and limited the area where tobacco cultivation was permitted. The imposition of these tax and price increases combined in 1781 with the effects of bad harvests and an epidemic to produce rebellion.

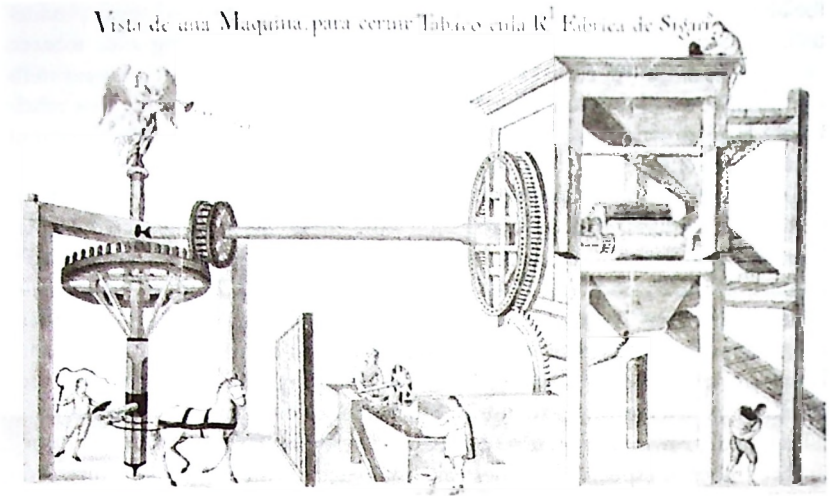
The participants in this *comunero* revolt were drawn from the middle and lower sectors of provincial society and included *castas* and even some indigenous communities. Eventually a rebel force that numbered in the thousands marched on the nearly defenseless capital of Bogotá. Representing the Bogotá elite, Archbishop Antonio Caballero y Góngora appeared to surrender to most of the rebel demands, but once the armed *comuneros* dispersed, loyal troops reestablished control. Only a small rebel force led by José Antonio Galán refused to accept the settlement, but he was soon defeated and later executed.

The Great Rebellion

In the eighteenth century the native peoples of the Andes challenged the colonial order in a series of violent confrontations. Five uprisings occurred in the 1740s, eleven in the 1750s, twenty in the 1760s, and twenty in the 1770s. In 1778 a mass phase of indigenous resistance began in Chayanta in Upper Peru when Tomás Katari's protests to Spanish courts and to the viceroy in Buenos Aires failed to end the exploitation of Aymara villages by corrupt Spanish officials. The murder of Tomás Katari by Spaniards in January 1781 propelled the region toward mass rebellion.

Five hundred miles away, near Cuzco, the Quechua *kuraka* José Gabriel Condorcanqui, also known as Tupac Amaru II, initiated a second mass uprising by seizing and executing a hated Spanish *corregidor* in November 1780. Within weeks he had gathered a large, if poorly armed, military force and won a bloody confrontation with Spanish militia. Tupac Amaru, who claimed descent from the Inka royal lineage and who had been educated by the Jesuits, represented a much graver threat to Spanish authority than the Aymara commoner Tomás Katari. He had commercial contacts across the region and maintained friendships with well-placed native-son and *mestizo* families, including the bishop of Cuzco. While some creoles, *mestizos*, and free blacks served as officers and advisors to Tupac Amaru, the most important leadership positions were filled by his kinsmen, none more important than his wife, Micaela Bastidas.

Even as he mobilized militarily, Tupac Amaru claimed he was carrying out the commands of the Spanish king and proposed reforms that would attract both Indians and disaffected creoles and *castas*. These included an end to the *repartimiento* of merchandise (the forced sale of goods to native communities), the suppression of the office of *corregidor*, termination of the *mita*, and the creation of a new *audiencia* in Cuzco. While this combination of loyalty to the Spanish king and



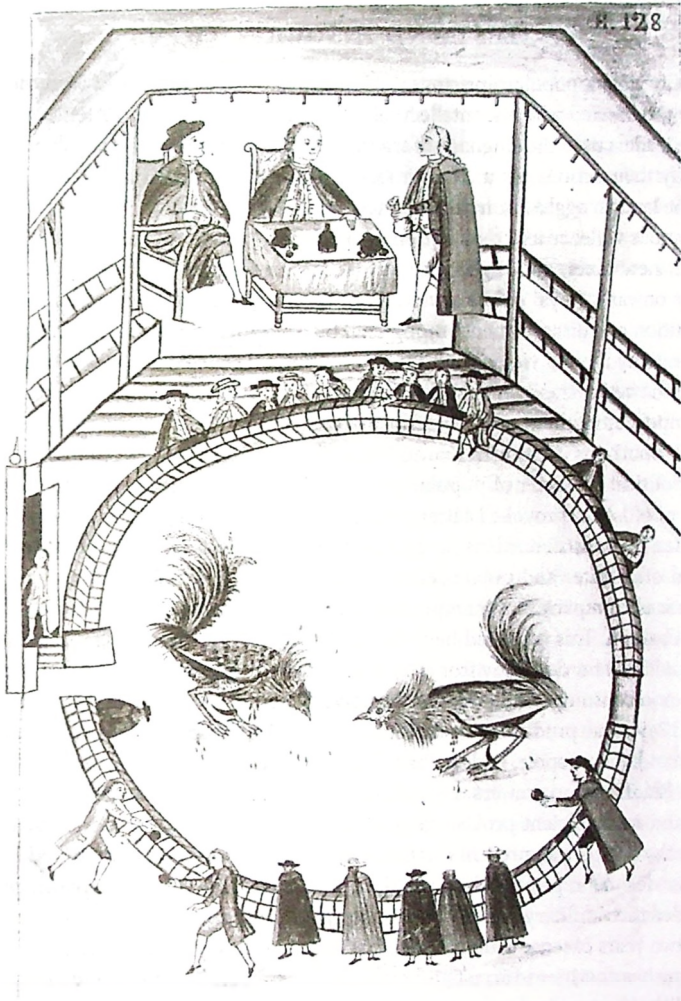
In the eighteenth century the newly established tobacco monopoly produced an important new stream of revenue for the Spanish Crown. This massive machine was used by the Mexico City tobacco factory to produce snuff.

The economy of Paraguay underwent similar complex changes during the eighteenth century. Throughout the late Habsburg period, yerba production dominated this isolated colony. A chronic currency shortage and the dominant role of the Society of Jesus in production and distribution, however, held back market expansion. The Society's expulsion in 1767 enabled rival producers to reallocate Indian laborers, purchase improved lands, and attract new capital. As a result, production increased, and more markets were found in Chile, Peru, and Brazil. This commercial vigor did not, however, improve the lot of the Paraguayan masses, who were increasingly pushed into debt peonage and tenancy.

Despite the remarkable growth of the peripheral economies, fundamental structural weaknesses remained. Much of the new growth was in exports, particularly of agricultural and grazing products. Yet bullion continued to dominate the relationship between several colonies and the metropolis. Chile exported nearly 900,000 pesos in gold and silver annually. Despite the growth in hide exports from Buenos Aires after 1776, silver from Potosi still contributed 80 percent of the value of all exports from the region. In New Granada, bullion provided 90 percent of export value. This hemorrhage of bullion drew down the colonial capital stock, limited the spread of commercial exchange, and hindered investment. The tardy development of banking, credit, and insurance in these colonies exacerbated the negative effect of the bullion loss.

Responding to new commercial opportunities, the producers of Cuban sugar, Venezuelan cacao, hides and yerba from the Río de la Plata, and Chilean wheat increased their investments, improving the land and buying slaves or hiring free

labor. The prosperity of these largely native-son producers depended heavily on the fragile and unpredictable geopolitical relationships of the European powers. After 1792 Spain's shifting military alliances with England and then France led to the breakdown of the reformed commercial system that had helped stimulate growth.



The residents of colonial Latin America enjoyed sports and games where betting was common. In this painting wagers are placed on a cockfight. The large figure at the top served as judge. Since an amateur painted this scene, there is a problem with perspective. The most important and powerful figures on the elevated stage are large, whereas the adult bettors arrayed around the ring are painted as miniatures.

focused demands for reform paralleled Tomás Katari's movement as well as earlier colonial protests, the scale and destructiveness of Tupac Amaru's rebellion made it the greatest threat to Spanish rule in more than 200 years.

Over 50,000 Quechua and Aymara commoners, most from villages still subject to the *mita* and *repartimiento* of merchandise, joined Tupac Amaru, radicalizing the movement and carrying out most of the violence against colonial officials as well as Spanish and creole merchants and property owners. Yet, despite this broad support, Tupac Amaru was opposed by the privileged Inka noble families of Cuzco, who dismissed his claims to hereditary authority, as well as by the majority of Spaniards, creoles, and *castas*, all of whom benefited from the exploitation of indigenous peoples. Unable to take Cuzco and hemmed in by an army sent from Lima, the end came quickly. The leader, many family members, and other allies were captured on April 6, 1781. Tupac Amaru, Micaela Bastidas, and their eldest son, as well as other key supporters, were executed on May 18. Their heads and limbs were then exhibited in the villages that had supported the rebellion.

These executions did not end the conflict, but the focus of armed struggle moved back to Upper Peru, where it was led by Tupac Katari and surviving kinsmen of Tupac Amaru. Julián Apasa, an Aymara commoner, took the name Tupac Katari to indicate the continuation of the struggles initiated by the martyred Tomás Katari and Tupac Amaru. Aymara commoners who dominated this radical and violent phase of the rebellion focused their violence on the wealthiest and most powerful beneficiaries of the colonial system, including Hispanicized Indians. Tupac Katari's massive army twice besieged La Paz before his defeat, capture, and execution in late 1781. Native armies led by Tupac Amaru's kinsmen continued the struggle until 1783, when peace was generally restored. The combined rebellions cost 100,000 lives and spread property destruction across two of Spain's most important colonies. Even though these protests failed militarily, they forced the termination of the abusive *repartimiento* of merchandise and led to the establishment of the *Audiencia* of Cuzco.

Conspiracies in Brazil

As in the Spanish colonies, the disruptions occasioned by imperial reforms and, after 1776, news of the American and later French revolutions combined to initiate a period of political unrest in Brazil. In 1789 Portuguese authorities uncovered a conspiracy that included members of the elite, intellectuals, and military officers in Minas Gerais. The conspirators' admiration for the Enlightenment and American Revolution was demonstrated by library collections that included works by Voltaire and other popular *philosophes* as well as copies of the Articles of Confederation and American state constitutions. But the active participation of the wealthiest conspirators was provoked by their massive debts to the Portuguese treasury. For them, an end to colonial rule appeared the only alternative to impending financial doom. Discovered before they could take action, the plot's leaders were arrested. Social eminence, economic resources, and the questionable actions of the captain-general saved almost all of the plotters and their silent

partners from death. Only one participant, Joaquim José da Silva Xavier, was executed. Known as Tiradentes (tooth-puller) for his part-time work, this military officer was hanged and then beheaded.

In Salvador, Bahia, nine years later, authorities discovered a conspiracy led by free *mulatos*, mostly artisans and a handful of soldiers. Some whites and a few slaves were arrested as well. The leaders of this conspiracy had clearly been influenced by the French and Haitian revolutions. When interrogated, one of the leaders said, "All [Brazilians] would become Frenchmen, in order to live in equality and abundance. . . . And that the difference between white, black and brown would be extinguished. . . ." The implication for a society in which whites made up only one fifth of the population stirred the authorities to action: They executed four leaders and punished other participants. Regardless of their birthplace and individual grievances, the white merchants, planters, and officials of Bahia believed that their self-interest required the maintenance of the slave system and racial discrimination.

Spain's American possessions experienced dramatic changes in the late colonial period. Population grew at unprecedented rates, and the mix of races, classes, and cultures was altered as well. In some colonies, the flood of imported slaves at the base of the social pyramid undermined the dignity and independence of free labor, introduced greater cultural diversity, and heightened racial tensions.

At the middle and upper levels of the social order, the arrival of Spanish immigrants stimulated native sons and daughters' growing sense of cultural distinctiveness and affection for their American homelands. The increased European demand for colonial products led to a territorial expansion of grazing and agriculture. This in turn meant the physical dispersal of those groups that wielded social and economic power. The fact that the "new men" of the late colonial period included producers of goods that carried little traditional prestige—hides, sugar, coffee, yerba—itself contradicted established assumptions about social rank.

In the peripheral colonies, the more fluid character of the recently formed elites—New Granada is a significant exception—was little constrained by the newly reformed and expanded colonial state. Indeed, everywhere viceroys and governors were commonly military men or career civil servants with little independent wealth or prestige. Intendants and subdelegates did not intimidate or awe the newly rich. Even the hastily constructed or poorly converted commercial buildings that housed the new representatives of the Bourbon monarchs in emerging regions lacked the intimidating scale of the architectural props for royal authority in New Spain and Peru. In many ways the Bourbon state was more irritating than awe-inspiring.

The relations of production and exchange in the 1790s differed profoundly from those in place at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Then the peripheral colonies sustained only small-scale interregional and international exchange relations. But by the reign of Charles IV these economies were closely linked with Europe and the United States. As a result of this transformation, they were richer

but also more dependent. Fluctuations in distant markets, foreign wars, and shifting European alliances all came to play crucial roles in determining local economic conditions. Although these changes were set in motion by Spain's administrative and commercial reforms and funded in part by the investments of Spanish merchants and joint-stock companies, the Spanish market could not absorb the productive potential of the increasingly dynamic peripheral colonies.

Despite increasing populations, the older viceroalties of New Spain and Peru remained bound by economies that still relied heavily on bullion for export. New Spain's expanding silver production continued to provide a major source of revenue that could be used to subsidize Cuba's defense in particular. Free trade within the empire fell victim to Spain's conflicts in Europe starting in 1796. By that time, moreover, finding ways to exist under financial exigency had emerged as the dominant issue faced by Charles IV and his advisors.

While the discovery of a handful of political conspiracies proved unnerving to Portuguese authorities at the end of the eighteenth century, Brazil was at a new peak of prosperity. Far more of the colony was settled and economically productive than in the 1690s before the mining boom. The colony's population had more than doubled, and vast areas of the interior had been brought within its economic and political spheres. Both the value and the diversity of exports had grown as well. Increasingly enlightened residents praised Brazil's progress and welcomed the promising future. Already the commercial center of the Luso-Brazilian empire by the end of the eighteenth century, Brazil would become more important with the arrival of the Portuguese court in 1808.

NOTE

1. C. E. Castañeda, "The Corregidor in Spanish Colonial Administration," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 9:4 (November 1929), p. 448.

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CHAPTER 11

Crisis and Political Revolution

CHRONOLOGY

Date	Location	Event
1789	France	French Revolution begins
1791	Haiti	Haitian Revolution begins
1793	France	Execution of Louis XVI
1793-95	Spain/France	War
1796-1802	Various locations (naval warfare)	Spain and France at war with England
1804-8	Various locations (naval warfare)	Spain and France at war with England
1807	Iberia	French invasion
1807	Portugal	Court flees to Brazil
1808	Spain	Abdications of Charles IV, Ferdinand VII
1808	Spain	Madrid uprising against the French, May 2, 1808; juntas; Central Junta; alliance with England
1808	New Spain	Elite Spaniards overthrow viceroy
1809	Upper Peru	Juntas in La Paz, Chuquisaca
1809	Quito	Quito
1809	America	Elections for representatives to Central Junta
1810	Spain	Regency; General and Extraordinary Cortes; French occupy Andalusia
1810	Caracas, Buenos Aires, Santiago, New Granada	Formation of juntas to rule in the name of Ferdinand VII
1810	New Spain	Hidalgo Revolt
1810	Buenos Aires	Sends first of three unsuccessful expeditions to Upper Peru
1810-11	America	Elections for deputies to General and Extraordinary Cortes
1811	New Spain	Hidalgo captured and executed; Morelos, insurgency
1811	Caracas	Independence, First Republic
1811	Banda Oriental	Artigas begins movement for independence
1811	Paraguay	Independence
1811	Cartagena, Quito	Independence
1812	Spain and Empire	Constitution of 1812

THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

War and revolution dominated the Atlantic world for the half-century that began with the American Revolution. The establishment of the Western Hemisphere's first independent nation and constitutional republic had little direct effect on Spanish America and Brazil even though the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution circulated widely in translation. The French Revolution, begun in 1789, had a much more dramatic consequence in the region. By early 1793 the French Revolution had entered a radical phase, writing a constitution, arresting and then executing King Louis XVI, and stripping the Catholic Church of most of its power and property. This radicalization also initiated more than twenty-five years of European warfare as other powers sought to contain revolutionary change. This assault on monarchy and religion, twin pillars of European and colonial order, as well as revolutionary insistence on individual and collective political rights, initially found few supporters in either Iberia or the colonies, but an intensifying cycle of warfare in the 1790s debilitated Spain, provoking fiscal crises and disrupting trade with the colonies. In Brazil and in Spanish colonies that depended on the labor of slaves, the Haitian Revolution begun in 1791 added the specter of servile insurrection and racial conflict to the era's uncertainties. While large colonial majorities remained resolutely hostile to emerging democratic and egalitarian ideas, the language of natural rights, popular sovereignty, and equality slowly built momentum across the colonial world.

The end of the French Revolution's radical phase in 1795 and the rapid rise to power of Napoleon Bonaparte more directly threatened Spain and Portugal and their colonial empires. When Napoleon elected to invade Portugal in 1807, the Portuguese royal family fled to Brazil. His fateful decision to use military power to place his brother Joseph on the throne of Spain unleashed a political revolution in the Hispanic world between 1808 and 1812. A popular, patriotic uprising against the French in Spain led the way, declaring the people sovereign and creating governments of resistance. Politically active citizens in municipalities in unoccupied Spain and the Americas were now drawn into a novel political process. This included indirect elections in Spain and its colonies, the articulation of local grievances, and, in some cities, the creation of juntas, committees of resistance, to rule until the French were defeated. The desire for greater political autonomy or home rule and full equality within an explicitly defined "Spanish Nation" that included both Spain and the dominions of its empire was widespread.

The French invasion and the mobilization of Spanish resistance entrenched the ideas of sovereignty of the people; a written constitution; representative government; the separation of legislative, judicial, and executive responsibilities; unprecedented equality before the law; and a broad definition of citizenship. During this same period, political opinion in the Spanish colonies split among three tendencies. Loyalists believed that officials appointed by whatever government existed in Spain should govern the colonies. Autonomists remained loyal to Spain and committed to the empire but sought the creation of local governments that

would exercise broad authority over domestic policies within a reformed Spanish Empire. Separatists sought total independence from Spain. While those favoring independence would ultimately triumph, there was little direct support for independence initially in the Spanish colonies and Brazil due to traditional allegiance to their monarchs and popular revulsion caused by the radical phase of the French Revolution. Conservative sentiment in Spain's Andean colonies also reflected the lingering effects of the massive indigenous rebellions of the 1770s and 1780s. In this region the reestablishment of stability, not a desire for political experimentation, dominated political life.

The Haitian Revolution, a violent revolution that ended slavery and established Haiti's independence, had an even more dramatic effect in Brazil and Spanish America. While a minority was stirred to emulate the abolitionism and republicanism of the Haitians, colonial elites feared servile revolution and embraced more intensely the colonial order. Except in Venezuela and New Granada, only after 1814 did colonial separatists gain strength relative to autonomists and push openly for a republican form of government. To their loyalist and monarchist or royalist opponents, these separatists were "rebels," "insurrectionists," "insurgents," or "revolutionaries." As supporters of independence, however, the separatists considered themselves "patriots" and, if they supported the creation of a republic, "republicans."

The Haitian Revolution

The radical democratic ideals of the French Revolution shook the old order in Europe, led to warfare on a global scale, and precipitated revolution in the Americas. In 1789 the French colony of Saint Domingue (now Haiti), the western half of the island of Española, was among the richest European colonies. Its plantations produced sugar, cotton, indigo, and coffee, accounting for two thirds of France's tropical imports and generating nearly one third of all French foreign trade. This impressive wealth depended on a slave regime notorious throughout the Caribbean for its severe punishments and poor living conditions. The slaves' high mortality and low fertility created an insatiable demand for more. As a result, the majority of the colony's 500,000 slaves were African-born on the eve of the French Revolution. When Louis XVI called France's Estates General in 1789, wealthy white planters sent a delegation to Paris charged with seeking more home rule and greater economic freedom. The colony's free mixed-race population, the *gens de couleur*, also sent representatives who sought to end racial discrimination and gain political equality with whites. Since the most prosperous *gens de couleur* were slave owners, they did not advocate abolition.

Growing political turmoil in France weakened the ability of French colonial administrators to maintain order and, in the vacuum that resulted, planters, poor whites, and the *gens de couleur* pursued their narrow interests, engendering an increasingly bitter and violent struggle. Given the slaves' hatred of the harsh regime that oppressed them and the accumulated grievances of the free people of color, there was no way to limit violence once the control of colonial officials and slave owners slipped.

By 1791 whites, led by the planter elite, were engaged in open warfare with the *gens de couleur*. This conflict, marked by reprisals and brutality, provided the slaves with an opportunity for a general uprising. Their rebellion began on the rich plantations of the north and then spread across the colony. Within weeks many of the richest plantations were destroyed and hundreds of masters and overseers killed. Eventually, the rebellious slaves gained the upper hand under the leadership of a former domestic slave, François Dominique Toussaint L'Ouverture. Having created a disciplined and effective military force, Toussaint demanded the abolition of slavery in 1793. In early 1794 the revolutionary National Convention in Paris confirmed this initiative and extended it throughout the French Empire. His authority now accepted by France, Toussaint led an invasion of the neighboring Spanish colony of Santo Domingo and freed its slaves as well. Despite these successes, free colored forces resisted Toussaint's authority, leading to the loss of thousands on both sides.

News of the Haitian slave rebellion spread quickly throughout the hemisphere. In the plantation regions of Spanish and Portuguese America, slave owners and officials feared that the slaves' victories in Haiti would provoke local rebellions. As a result, they did everything they could to identify potential rebels and suppress the transmission of revolutionary propaganda. Fearful that the large local slave population would rise up in imitation of Haiti, Spanish colonial authorities in distant Buenos Aires, for example, reacted to rumors of conspiracy by arresting



Toussaint's army of former slaves fight French troops at battle of Ravine à Couleuvres in 1802.

scores of suspected conspirators. Arrests and repression also occurred in Brazil, Cuba, Venezuela, and Central America.

Following a conservative reaction to the excesses of the Terror in France, Napoleon Bonaparte took power in 1799 and decided to reassert French control of its Caribbean colonies and reestablish slavery. He sent large military forces to both Haiti and Guadeloupe. Initially successful in Haiti, the French captured and exiled Toussaint to France, where he died in prison. Although the French military ultimately reestablished colonial authority in Guadeloupe, a much larger French military force failed to defeat Toussaint's free black successors in Haiti. In 1804 this new leadership declared independence from France, creating the free republic of Haiti and joining the United States as the second independent nation in the Western Hemisphere.

Independence and abolition were achieved at a terrible cost: tens of thousands perished and the economy was nearly destroyed. At least 50,000 French sailors and soldiers died from disease and wounds, most as a result of Napoleon's effort to reimpose slavery and colonial rule. The human cost borne by the slave and free black populations was even larger. With independence Haitians faced endemic poverty and privation made worse by the hostility of their neighbors and by France's imposition of reparations.

AN ERA OF WAR AND CRISIS FOR SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

Charles III died in late 1788, leaving Spain and the empire peaceful and reasonably prosperous. The Crown's normal income was nearly adequate for routine expenditures, and the royal debt was modest. By early 1808, when his son Charles IV abdicated, the imperial panorama looked very different. Except for occasional interludes of peace, Spain had been at war since 1793. English fleets had destroyed its navy, built at enormous cost, and Napoleon had come to determine Spain's foreign policy while exacting financial tribute. Spanish colonial trade increasingly benefited neutral shippers and British manufacturers rather than Spanish merchants and producers, and a rapidly growing debt burdened the royal treasuries in Spain and the colonies. In addition, the prominence of the powerful royal favorite Manuel Godoy, grandiloquently titled Duke of Alcudia, Prince of the Peace, and Admiral-General of Spain and the Indies, had discredited the royal family. The French occupied neighboring Portugal in the absence of the court, which had fled the invaders in 1807 and sailed to safety in Brazil. Yet despite the numerous difficulties, almost no one in Spain, Portugal, or the colonies expected that in less than two decades the mainland empires in America would be independent.

The Cost of War

The execution of Louis XVI on January 21, 1793, led Spain into the coalition of countries fighting against the spread of revolution. Spaniards were united against regicide, and initially the war enjoyed popular support. Military defeats, however, cost Spain its remaining portion of the island of Española in the treaty signed in 1795.

Angered over Spain's decision to make peace with France unilaterally, England attacked Spanish shipping. These provocations, a belief that a land war with France was more dangerous than naval conflict with England, and varied dynastic ambitions led Spain to sign an alliance with the French republic. The inevitable war with Britain then began in October 1796. The defeat of the Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent in early 1797 opened the way for a British blockade of Cádiz until 1800. The Peace of Amiens in 1802 restored peace to Europe once more, and Spain, which already had ceded Louisiana to France, now lost Trinidad to Britain. Little more than a French satellite, Spain found itself in renewed conflict with England beginning in late 1804. Victory over the combined Spanish and French fleets at Trafalgar in 1805 gave Britain uncontested dominance over the seas.

Spain's nearly continuous involvement in war between 1793 and 1808 proved extremely costly in terms of both direct financial expenditures and the loss of trade and regular remittance of bullion from the colonies. An important consequence was that earlier policies to integrate Spain and the colonies economically gave way to short-term fiscal considerations. Long-established reciprocity and trust that bound colonial populations and the Crown succumbed to the Spanish government's desperate attempts to extract as much revenue as possible from the Indies, regardless of the consequences for New World economies.

An Overwhelming Debt

Spain's tax system could not provide the funds needed to pay the extraordinary expenses of war. When initial borrowing proved inadequate, the Crown turned to Spain's own money market. In 1794-95 it issued treasury bills (*vales reales*) worth over 64 million *pesos de vellón*, a sum equal to nearly 75 percent of the total regular peninsular revenues in these years. Buoyed by the sale of these treasury bills and bonds, the treasury's income in 1795 was the largest of the era. Ominously, the nation's deficit was almost equal to total income in 1792, the last year of peace. Conflict with Britain in 1796 forced the Crown to issue additional bonds and treasury bills whose total value exceeded *all* normal treasury income from the American colonies between 1792 and 1807. Napoleon's demand for financial subsidies beginning in 1803 and the renewal of hostilities with England quickly pushed the Crown to the brink of bankruptcy.

Neutral Trade

The rapid deterioration of Spain's finances after 1793 and the subsequent disruption of normal trading patterns profoundly affected Spain's commercial and political relations with its colonies. The strength of the Spanish fleet and the alliance with Britain during the French war enabled American treasure to continue to reach Spain, maintaining trade with the colonies, although the number of sailings dropped. Conditions changed rapidly following the initiation of hostilities with Britain in late 1796.

The British blockade of Cádiz paralyzed Spain's transatlantic trade. Whereas 171 ships sailed from America to Cádiz in 1796, only 9 ships arrived the following

year. Spain's inability to maintain its trade with the colonies spurred colonial officials in Cuba and Venezuela to open their ports to neutral traders, a practice used previously during the American Revolution. In Madrid, policymakers recognized that the colonies needed some trade outlets and that state services such as mail delivery and the provision of mercury and administrative supplies had to be continued. In addition, they wanted to maintain some portion of their traditional market share to prevent the colonies from establishing new industries and trade links that would ultimately undermine the entire colonial system. These goals underlay the Crown's decree of November 18, 1797, sanctioning neutral trade. Intended as a temporary wartime expedient to keep the imperial system afloat, the new policy facilitated the elaboration of non-Spanish commercial ties for colonial merchants and producers that could not be eliminated when peace returned.

The merchants of Cádiz fought tenaciously against neutral trade and secured a short suspension in April 1799. Widespread noncompliance in the colonies and the continued need for revenue, however, led the Crown in January 1801 again to allow neutral trade. After a brief peace and an attempt to reestablish the prewar system, renewed conflict with England in 1804 forced the reauthorization of neutral trade as the Spanish Crown sought to obtain colonial bullion by any means to pay its enormous financial commitments to France.

The commercial pressures experienced by the colonies varied. Regions that relied on the exportation of agricultural and pastoral products for their economic well-being—notably Cuba, Venezuela, and the Río de la Plata—had to sell them in a timely manner or watch them deteriorate. In contrast, New Spain and, to a lesser degree, Peru could store bullion until the return of peace and withstand two or three years of disrupted commerce by reducing consumption and promoting local manufacturing and agriculture. The most immediate and persistent pressure for neutral trade thus came from the empire's emerging peripheral regions.

U.S. trade with Spanish America expanded dramatically with the advent of neutral trade. Exports of American flour and substantial quantities of reexported British textiles flowed to the Spanish American colonies; Havana and other West Indian ports proved to be especially profitable markets. U.S. exports to the Spanish West Indies grew sixfold from 1795–96 to 1800–01, reaching nearly \$11 million in the later period, and expanded fourfold for Spanish America as a whole.

Consolidation of *Vales Reales*

Cumulative deficits resulting from war and the French alliance forced Spain to take desperate financial measures. The massive issues of *vales reales*—essentially unbacked paper money—posed a particular difficulty because they had depreciated so much in value. In 1798 the Crown ordered the sale of property held by a variety of public and religious institutions in Spain. These institutions were to deliver the proceeds to the Crown in exchange for its promise to pay 3 percent interest a year on the amounts transferred. Although it had planned to retire the *vales reales* with these funds, the Crown used the money to meet current expenses. Frantically seeking additional resources to fight the second war with Britain, on

December 26, 1804, Charles IV extended to the colonies the 1798 decree for the consolidation of *vales reales*.

In Spain, religious institutions affected by the consolidation held real property whose sale led to some land redistribution, increased commercialization of agriculture, and economic growth. In the New World most funds of religious institutions and pious works were invested in loans extended to *hacendados*, merchants, miners, and others. Consolidation, therefore, meant that those in debt to religious institutions had to pay off their loans quickly, leading in many cases—especially in New Spain—to the loss of property or bankruptcy. Anger over the implementation of consolidation was widespread. Although the Crown collected more than 15 million pesos, over two thirds of it in New Spain, it paid a heavy political price:



Portrait of Ferdinand VII.

both creoles and peninsulars grew dissatisfied with a government that so cavalierly disrupted local economies and undermined personal finances.

Royal Family and Favorite

The prestige of the Spanish Crown diminished substantially during the reign of Charles IV (1788–1808). A well-meaning but lazy monarch, Charles took his wife's advice and devoted himself to hunting rather than affairs of state. By 1808 the Spanish people viewed him with pity and scorn. They hated Queen Luisa and Manuel Godoy, reputedly one of her lovers. Rising from a modest position in the palace guard, Godoy came to dominate the royal family. Some even claimed that he had fathered two children born to the queen in the 1790s. Whatever the truth, in 1792 this young favorite replaced the elderly and experienced Count of Aranda as prime minister. Save for a brief hiatus, Godoy remained the most powerful man in Spain until 1808. Disgruntled political rivals blamed Godoy for Spain's misfortunes as the country endured the effects of war, fiscal crisis, and commercial decline. Despised by the aristocracy, distrusted by intellectuals and professionals, and widely ridiculed by the populace, his sole supporters were the king and queen.

Hatred of Godoy was matched by a corresponding enthusiasm for Prince Ferdinand. As heir apparent, he embodied the hopes of everyone dismayed by Charles IV's virtual abdication of authority to a royal favorite. In March 1808, Ferdinand's supporters rioted in Aranjuez, where the royal family was then resident, and forced Charles IV to dismiss Godoy. On the following day, Charles abdicated in favor of Ferdinand. The Spanish populace greeted joyously the news of Godoy's fall and Charles's abdication, but the arrival of a French army of 40,000 men in Madrid dampened the festivities.

Napoleon and Iberia, 1807–08

Napoleon made decisions in 1807 and 1808 that profoundly affected the Spanish and Portuguese empires. Having inaugurated in November 1806 the "continental system" prohibiting the European importation of British merchandise, in mid-1807 he tried to force Portugal to declare war on England and close its ports to British traders, a demand that Prince Regent John rejected. Angered, Napoleon secured passage across Spanish territory for a French army that captured Lisbon on November 30, 1807. Less than a week earlier, Prince John and the royal family; administrative, ecclesiastic, and military hierarchies; and numerous nobles—some 10,000 to 15,000 people in all—had sailed to Brazil under British escort. As a result of this remarkable and unprecedented move, from 1808 to 1821 John ruled his empire from Rio de Janeiro rather than Lisbon.

Napoleon then decided to withhold recognition of Ferdinand VII as monarch and to rid Spain of the Bourbons. At Bayonne in May 1808, he obtained abdications from Ferdinand and Charles. Sending them into comfortable exile, the French emperor named his brother Joseph King José Napoleon I of "the Spains." A hastily assembled delegation of Spaniards at Bayonne then approved a constitution for "the dominions of Spain and the Indies." This document gave colonial residents

representation within a constitutional monarchy that would provide “political regeneration.” Although Napoleon’s designs ultimately failed, the rhetoric of reform and regeneration, a written constitution, representation in a legislature, equal rights for Spain and the overseas dominions, and constitutional protections for citizens echoed in patriot Spain and its overseas dominions.

Independence from France

Napoleon’s *golpe de estado*, or coup d’état, in Bayonne triggered mass resistance to French plans in Spain and, when news of this treachery reached them, throughout the American colonies. Even before the coup, on May 2, 1808, French troops were forced to bloodily suppress a mass uprising in Madrid. Hearing of the massacre, the residents of Móstoles, a small town near Madrid, unilaterally declared war against the French.

Rapidly formed provincial juntas, governing committees recruited among ecclesiastics, aristocrats, wealthy commoners, and professionals, declared their loyalty to Ferdinand and their commitment to defend religion and preserve the territorial integrity of the deposed monarch’s realms. They also proclaimed their opposition to the French and their willingness to die rather than acquiesce in Napoleonic rule—in short, their independence. Whereas the British refer to the conflict that followed as the Peninsular War, for the Spaniards it was and remains the War of Independence.

These spontaneous patriotic demonstrations spread to the colonies. In Caracas on November 22, 1808, the city fathers formally endorsed “the conservation of our Holy Religion, the restoration of our beloved King [Ferdinand], the perpetuation of an unalterable union of all Spanish Pueblos, and the [territorial] integrity of the Monarchy.” Cities throughout Spanish America—Havana, Mexico City, Vera Cruz, Campeche, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Santa Fe de Bogotá, Santiago, Lima, and many more—swore allegiance to Ferdinand and thereby independence from the rule of *El Rey Intruso*, or, less kindly, “Pepe Botellas” (“Joe Bottles”), as the Spaniards termed José I.

The French sought to preserve the territorial integrity of the Spanish monarchy with its “rich prize” of the American dominions, as was clear in the formal title Napoleon gave his brother: “King of Spain and the Indies.” French agents departed for America immediately. The representative of Napoleon seeking recognition for José I in Buenos Aires suffered arrest and the public burning of his official dispatches. Authorities also imprisoned the French agent who landed in Puerto Rico on July 24 and seized the documents he hoped to distribute later in Cuba. Although a *Gazeta Extraordinaria del Gobierno* of January 23, 1809, reported that all of the “agents of the tyrant Napoleon” had been arrested, more arrived later.

Authorities in Havana in February 1810 reported that the French had sent agents to Cuba via the United States, where they were to “stir the fire of discord and prepare our slavery and ruin.” The captain-general reported in late July that “one of the perfidious Spaniards paid by France to disturb the peace” in the Indies would be executed the following day. Suspicious that the viceroy of Buenos Aires

and the captain-general of Caracas favored the French, Spanish authorities removed both in 1810. Fear of French rule and the idea of a “loyal rebellion” to prevent it contributed to the Hidalgo Revolt in Mexico later in the year.

GOVERNMENTS OF RESISTANCE AND POLITICAL REVOLUTION, 1808-12

The Napoleonic invasion of Iberia, the abdications of Charles IV and Ferdinand VII, the spontaneous creation of patriotic provincial juntas, and the imposition of King José Napoleon I initiated a political revolution. Beginning in 1808 it swept through Spain and the overseas dominions, permanently destroyed the unthinking and habitual acceptance of monarchy as embodied in the Habsburg and Bourbon dynasties, and initiated experiments with representative, constitutional government. Political life in the colonies would never be the same.

Few Spaniards acknowledged the legitimacy of orders issued by Napoleon's representatives in Spain or the Spanish officials who worked with them (*afrancesados*). By late August the recently formed provincial juntas of resistance had agreed to create a single sovereign body—the Central Junta—to prosecute the war, maintain the British alliance and military support, and retain the colonies. Acting in the name of Ferdinand, the Central Junta's legitimacy was initially recognized throughout Spain and the Indies. Juntas created later in American colonies proved less willing to cooperate, although they also claimed to represent Ferdinand.

The Central Junta convened in Aranjuez in September 1808, but military defeats drove it to Seville in December. In an effort to maintain the colonial financial assistance that Spain desperately needed, on January 22, 1809, it sought American representation. Subsequent French successes prompted it, in the fall of 1809, to call “the General and Extraordinary *Cortes* [or parliament] of the Nation.” Faced with some 350,000 French troops in Spain, the Central Junta evacuated Seville and turned over its authority to a five-member Council of Regency of Spain and the Indies in late January 1810. With the need to legitimize the government of resistance apparent, an unprecedented unicameral *cortes* began to meet on September 24, 1810. The “Liberals” formed a majority. Their agenda included turning the Spanish Nation into a modern constitutional monarchy complete with sovereignty resting with the nation, not the monarch; a clear separation of powers; an elected *cortes*; individual rights; and freedom of the press on political issues. Elected deputies representing both Spain and the overseas kingdoms, as the colonies conceived themselves, crafted a liberal constitution promulgated in March 1812. This remarkable document sealed a political revolution whose ideas persisted despite Ferdinand VII's efforts to restore the old regime following his return to Spain in 1814.

New World Juntas and the Pursuit of American Support

The shocking events in Spain prompted Americans who wanted formal political autonomy to argue for their equal right to establish juntas, like those in Spain, to

govern on behalf of the captive Ferdinand. Conversely, persons who feared greater autonomy in the Americas, primarily Spanish immigrants, argued for recognition of a patriotic junta in Spain, first the Junta of Sevilla and then the Central Junta. To prevent the creation of a local junta dominated by creoles, Spaniards in Mexico City overthrew Viceroy José de Iturrigaray by a coup on September 15, 1808, an illegal action that destroyed the principle of legitimacy that had characterized Spanish rule for centuries. On September 21, a *cabildo abierto* in Montevideo created a junta controlled by powerful Spaniards who then refused to accept the authority of the viceroy in Buenos Aires. On May 25, 1809, the *Audiencia* of Charcas deposed its president, but his successor then exiled the judges. In Quito on August 10, 1809, creoles overthrew the president of the *audiencia* and established a junta as well, while in July the captain-general in Caracas proposed the creation of a junta but quickly changed his mind and arrested the more than forty men who had petitioned for this action. Not until 1810 would proponents of juntas in the colonies be generally successful.

Various Spanish governments of resistance, including the Central Junta, the Council of Regency, and the *Cortes* of Cádiz, worked to retain the empire and its financial resources. In doing so, they also helped spread revolutionary doctrines and politicize the colonial population. The initial patriotic message was clear: equality between American colonials and Spaniards was forthcoming. In an unprecedented step, in October 1808, the Central Junta decided to add American representatives, although it waited until January 22, 1809, to release the summons. The language was remarkable: "Considering that the vast and precious dominions owned by Spain in the Indies are not properly colonies or factories . . . but an essential and integral part of the Spanish monarchy," each of the four viceroalties and six captaincies-general "must be represented" by a person selected by indirect elections. This promise of a new, inclusive relationship as part of a monarchy-wide government encouraged those in the colonies wanting greater autonomy. Nearly one hundred colonial municipalities held elections, but only one elected American deputy actually reached the Central Junta before its dissolution. The importance of this experience lay in the Junta's clear declaration of the right of American representation and in its mandate for the selected deputies to bring lists of grievances with them.

The widespread enthusiasm and allegiance pledged to Ferdinand VII by all governing bodies in the Americas in 1808 eventually turned to pessimism as the French drove the Central Junta from Seville in late January 1810. Under siege on the Royal Isle of León near Cádiz, on February 14, 1810, the Regency called for American representation in the forthcoming monarchy-wide *cortes* in terms that strengthened the Central Junta's articulation of equality within the empire and rejected past Spanish behavior:

From this moment, American Spaniards, you see yourselves raised to the dignity of free men; you are no longer . . . bent under a yoke [made] heavier the farther you were from the center of power, looked upon with indifference . . . destroyed by ignorance. Be aware that on pronouncing or writing the name of the person who will come to represent you in the national Congress, your destinies no longer depend on ministers, viceroys, or governors; they are in your hands.

The decree called again for the election of deputies from the colonies. Only the delegate from Puerto Rico was present when the *cortes* met. Effective colonial representation was provided by twenty-nine substitute deputies (*suplentes*) elected from among colonial residents in Cádiz. For autonomists in the Americas, the *cortes* offered a potential way to pursue their goal of significant home rule within the context of the Spanish monarchy, but, given the process of selection, these substitutes could not adequately represent the range of American opinion.

The explicit admission of Spanish oppression of Americans in the call for elections and the declaration that they were now “free men,” and thus equal to Spaniards, both raised colonial expectations and reinforced the sense of grievance common among many creoles. Americans interpreted the assertion that past oppression had ended as a promise that political and economic changes were near. Elections were held, and colonial municipal councils publicly discussed grievances as they again prepared instructions for deputies.

News that the Central Junta had dissolved after appointing a Council of Regency gave new life to autonomists and encouraged the still-small number of separatists in much of Spain's mainland empire. In Caracas on April 19, 1810, a *cabildo abierto* noted the Americas' status as “integral parts of the Crown of Spain,” rather than colonies, and thus repositories of “interim sovereignty.” Accordingly, it refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Regency established without “the vote of these faithful inhabitants.” The new Junta of Caracas soon sent the captain-general of Venezuela and most members of the *Audiencia* of Caracas into exile.

In Buenos Aires, a *cabildo abierto* on May 25, 1810, created a Provisional Governing Junta of the Provinces of Río de la Plata in the name of Ferdinand VII and soon dispatched the viceroy and other leading officials to the Canary Islands. Although the composition and name of the ruling body in Buenos Aires would change numerous times in the following decade, this “May Revolution” initiated effective political autonomy under creole leadership in most of what is now Argentina.

In New Granada autonomists established juntas in Cartagena, Cali, Socorro, Santa Fe de Bogotá, and Santa Marta during July and August 1810. In an unusual action, the junta in Bogotá recognized the Council of Regency on July 21 but retracted this recognition five days later. Significant differences among the sixteen juntas created in New Granada precluded cooperation and the formation of a single government.

The General and Extraordinary Cortes of Cádiz

The *cortes* opened on the Royal Isle of León near Cádiz on September 24, 1810, with 102 deputies present: 27 representing the Americas, 2 representing the Philippines, and 73 from Spain. Of this total, fifty-six deputies had been elected by their constituents; forty-six were substitutes (*suplentes*) selected locally. By the time the *cortes* adjourned on September 20, 1813, a total of sixty-seven individuals had served as deputies representing the Americas and Philippines. As its first act of business, the *cortes* declared itself the legitimate, sovereign authority and the

Spanish Nation's legislative body, distinct and separate from executive and judicial branches of government.

Creole deputies thought that the extent of American representation was the most important issue before the *cortes*. On the assembly's second day of deliberations, the American deputies opened their campaign for the *cortes* to reaffirm explicitly the declarations of the Central Junta and the Regency concerning equal rights for the "overseas dominions" "as an integral part of the monarchy." After considerable discussion in secret sessions, on October 15, 1810, the *cortes* reaffirmed that Spain and the Indies formed a single monarchy and nation and declared that persons whose ancestors came from Europe and America, but not the descendants of African slaves, were equal in rights. Defeated in this effort to get the number of each hemisphere's deputies determined, American representatives reintroduced the issue again when the *cortes* began to write the constitution.

The lengthy debate over American representation in the *cortes* focused on the definition of citizenship, for only citizens would be counted in apportioning deputies. The central issue was the status of free persons of African descent. Because the total population in the American colonies was about 50 percent larger than that in Spain, counting free blacks as citizens would give Americans a majority in the *cortes*. Again, however, the *cortes* refused to include all free residents in apportioning deputies. This defeat strongly suggested that the vaunted new equality was hollow.

This debate was also important because a number of American deputies emphasized the fundamental equality of all free men and made exaggerated claims for racial harmony in the Americas. Particularly in regions with a substantial *casta* population—for example, in Cartagena, New Granada—the American deputies' vocal support of equality for all free men took root. As a result, it stimulated *casta* support of home rule and ultimately for independence. Other issues, of course, were also important to the American deputies. With mixed success, they pressured their peninsular counterparts on free trade, an end to restrictions on agriculture and manufacturing in the colonies, the abolition of monopolies, a guaranteed percentage of bureaucratic appointments going to native sons, and the restoration of the Society of Jesus.

Numerous developments between 1808 and 1812 suggested that Spanish colonials could gain greater local and regional influence within the "Spanish Monarchy," as the *cortes* defined the whole of Spanish dominions in Europe and the Americas. At the same time, Spanish authorities permitted an unprecedented freedom of the press and the open expression of political ideas. The junta's authorization of constitutional municipal councils in all communities with 1,000 or more inhabitants brought many thousands of new participants into the process of governance, as did the creation of provincial deputations. Although the failure to secure representation based on total population and the inability to obtain free trade frustrated many American deputies, their political gains were substantial.

Approved in March, the Constitution of 1812 documented the political revolution that had transpired. Following the broad outline of European liberal

opinion, it declared that sovereignty resided in the nation and that only the nation's representatives had the right to establish laws. Although retaining a hereditary monarch, it vested many of the powers formerly exercised by Spanish kings in the hands of an elected *cortes* that would write laws, determine public expenses, establish taxes, and approve treaties. Equality before the law, with few exceptions, replaced a myriad of exemptions and privileges, including those of the nobility. The mingling of legislative, administrative, and judicial powers that characterized old-regime institutions gave way to a clear separation of responsibilities. *Audiencias* were limited to judicial matters. *Jefes políticos superiores*, colonial administrators who replaced viceroys, exercised limited authority with an intendant and elected members of a provincial deputation. Initially advanced by a Mexican deputy, the new institution, called a *provincial deputation*, provided for significant provincial autonomy.

The collapse of the Spanish monarchy, a political revolution marked by the creation of juntas, the Regency, the *cortes*, and, ultimately, the writing of a constitution, created a context in which some colonials explored the possibility of independence in 1810. The transition from political discussions to military conflict quickly followed in many Spanish colonies. Contemporaries and later historians have identified both grievances and changes in the intellectual environment that served to justify the actions that followed.

Among frequently mentioned "causes of independence" are creole-peninsular hostility, a growing creole self-consciousness, trade restrictions, the Enlightenment, the precedent of the American Revolution, and the revolutionary ideology of the French Revolution. Although neither individually nor collectively were these "causes" responsible for the initiation of the insurgent movements, once open conflict was under way, they did affect the course of the war, justify actions that insurgents took, and influence new forms of political organization. Because the Portuguese royal family escaped from Napoleon in 1807 and established their court in Brazil, that colony necessarily experienced a fundamentally different trajectory toward independence than did the Spanish possessions.

The independence movements in both Spanish South America and Brazil lacked the coherence of ideology and leadership present in the American Revolution. Because Spain's governments of resistance were still fighting French armies until late 1813 and Ferdinand VII's resources were limited, the initial effort to retain the Spanish colonies depended primarily on the political will, financial means, and military capacity of loyalists residing in the New World. Yet, despite these grave limitations on royalist power, Spanish American insurgents gained independence with great difficulty. In some regions the military campaigns and the resultant destruction of resources lasted more than a decade. Both the duration of these bitter contests and the equivocal political legacies inherited by the newly independent governments were linked historically to the colonial experience that had promoted class and race conflicts. Where these divisions were deepest, independence was achieved with difficulty, and democracy quickly failed.

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CHAPTER 12

From Empire to Independence

CHRONOLOGY

Date	Location	Event
1812	Spain and Empire	Constitution of 1812
1813	Spain and Empire	Elections for deputies to <i>cortes</i>
1814	Spain and Empire	Ferdinand VII returns, abrogates constitution
1814	Venezuela	End of Second Republic
1814	Chile	Royalist army defeats Chileans at Rancagua
1815	Venezuela	Morillo expedition from Spain arrives, reestablishes Spanish control
1815	New Spain	Morelos executed; insurgency and counterinsurgency continue
1816	United Provinces of Río de la Plata	Buenos Aires and provincial allies declare independence
1816	New Granada	Morillo expedition reestablishes Spanish rule
1817	Chile	San Martín's army defeats royalists
1818	Chile	Independence
1819	New Granada	Bolívar's victory at Boyacá; independence
1820	Spain	Riego Revolt; liberals in power; constitution restored; Ferdinand VII constitutional monarch
1820	Peru	San Martín's army arrives in Peru
1821	Venezuela	Independence follows victory at Carabobo
1821	Peru	Lima proclaims Peruvian independence
1821	New Spain	Plan of Iguala and Mexican independence
1821	Central American towns	Declare independence individually
1821	Panama	Declares independence from Spain
1822	Brazil	Independence
1822	Mexican Empire	Agustín I emperor
1822	Quito (Ecuador)	Sucre's victory at Pichincha means independence
1823	Mexico	Agustín I forced into exile
1823	Spain	French troops restore Ferdinand VII as absolute monarch
1824	Mexico	Iturbide executed; Federal Constitution
1824	Peru	Patriot victories at Junín and Ayacucho; Peru independent
1825	Upper Peru (Bolivia)	Independence
1826	Peru	Capitulation of Callao ends Spanish resistance

because incendiary tracts published in rebel areas circulated widely. In addition, even when colonial officials tried to limit access to news, publications from Spain reported political debates in detail, complete with the very language that inspired revolutionaries in the colonies: "popular sovereignty," "liberty," "equality," and "independence."

Localism and Regionalism

Tensions had long existed between colonial capital cities such as Lima, Mexico City, and Buenos Aires, which had a strong peninsular presence, and their distant, creole-dominated political dependencies. The creation of many rival juntas in Spain unintentionally served as precedent to justify claims of provincial autonomy by creole elites in smaller colonial cities and towns. The fate of the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata after 1810 exemplifies the strength of autonomist sentiment, but similar conflicts occurred elsewhere as well.

Soon after news reached Buenos Aires that a Council of Regency claimed authority in Spain, many of the city's most prominent citizens met as a *cabildo abierto* on May 25, 1810. They created a Provisional Governing Junta of the Provinces of Río de la Plata in the name of Ferdinand VII and soon expelled the viceroy and other Spanish officials. Buenos Aires and most of the territory later encompassed in Argentina would never again be under Spanish control.

The new rulers in Buenos Aires struggled to retain control over the viceroyalty. Repeatedly unsuccessful military campaigns demonstrated that they could not. With Uruguay and Paraguay effectively independent and Upper Peru reattached to Lima, at last, in 1816, the Province of Buenos Aires and its remaining regional allies declared formal independence from Spain. Ultimately, the former viceroyalty became the separate nations of Paraguay, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Argentina.

Caracas was among the first colonial capitals to create a junta. After receiving news in April 1810 that the French occupied "almost all of the kingdoms and provinces of Spain," the city council established a junta to rule in the name of Ferdinand and ousted the local *audiencia* and the captain-general. The new government encouraged municipal councils elsewhere to create juntas as well. Once established, some of them resisted accepting the authority of Caracas. When the capital supported a declaration of independence on July 5, 1811, for example, the provinces of Coro and Maracaibo refused to do so. Venezuela would remain divided between separatists and loyalists into the 1820s.

The unity of colonial New Granada soon broke down as well. Between June 14 and August 10, 1810, Cartagena, Cali, Pamplona, el Socorro, Santa Fe de Bogotá, and Santa Marta formed separate juntas claiming to rule in the name of Ferdinand VII. Territories under the earliest juntas sought local autonomy, whereas others, like Cartagena, declared complete independence. Some remained royalist, a decision that often reflected long-standing antipathies toward neighboring cities. Because of New Granada's inability to coalesce into a stable political entity, the period 1810–16 is known in Colombia as the "*Patria Boba*," or "Foolish Fatherland."

Crisis and Transformation of the Imperial Economy

Between 1808 and 1826 trade between Spanish America and the Atlantic world was transformed. Already disrupted by neutral trade because of war with England, traditional commerce between Spain and its colonies suffered further after the French invasion of 1808. Within five years Spanish American markets had few Spanish products but were full of British and other foreign goods, and foreign ships largely carried most colonial exports. While the governments of resistance in Spain refused to allow their ally Britain to trade legally with the colonies, many officials in the Americas disregarded this policy to address serious fiscal needs, meet consumers' demands, and facilitate the export of cacao, cochineal, indigo, hides, and other perishable products.

In 1809, for example, Viceroy Baltasar Hidalgo de Cisneros opened the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata to British trade. Faced with the need to pay a militia of 8,000 men, he was desperate for the tax revenue available in cash through this commerce. The Buenos Aires junta and its successors continued this policy.

Despite such expedients, Spanish officials in the Americas never had adequate resources to meet military expenditures. Where the insurrectionists were in control, they similarly suffered fiscal shortfalls despite taxing trade as a major source of revenue. Viceroy of Peru Joaquín de la Pezuela (1816–21) permitted foreign traders to enter the port of Callao and sell their wares to collect desperately needed customs revenues. In Chile, the patriot leader Bernardo O'Higgins opened the ports in 1817. Neither the volume of foreign trade nor the taxes collected enabled Spanish administrators or their revolutionary opponents to meet their fiscal obligations, but the damage done to local commercial interests was ruinous as traditional patterns of credit and exchange were destroyed. Put simply, exports from Spanish America during the years 1810–26 suffered from the consequences of war, as well as from more mundane causes. Damage, flooding, and loss of workers in the mines of New Spain dramatically reduced silver mining. Peruvian silver exports also fell. In addition, rebellions reduced gold mining in New Granada, cochineal production in New Spain, and cacao exports from Venezuela.

Rightly worried about the safety of their investments, starting in 1810 Spaniards began moving their capital from the mainland colonies to Havana, to Puerto Rico, and, after the expulsion of the French, back to Spain or France. Royalists leaving New Spain in 1814 allegedly took some 12 million pesos in private wealth with them as they relocated to places still controlled by the king. Spain's imperial economy, based on trade restrictions, was failing in 1808 and was almost completely destroyed well before the patriots in the New World achieved political independence.

Resort to Arms

The early military conflicts spreading across the colonies were between loyalists and insurrectionists, not narrowly between persons born in Spain or the colonies. In the initial conflicts, both sides asserted that they were fighting on behalf of Ferdinand VII. It became clear quickly, however, that armies were often fighting for

Ferdinand VII returned to his throne in 1814. Aided by British armies and Napoleon's forced withdrawal of troops after his disastrous Russian campaign, Spanish armies and guerrilla bands had defeated the French and forced his release. The monarch promptly abrogated the Constitution of 1812 and decided to use military force to resolve the political status of the colonies. His return removed the justification for juntas created by his abdication and the French occupation. In fact, few juntas had survived, although the Buenos Aires junta and its successors exercised effective independence after 1810.

Well before Ferdinand's return, some autonomists in Spanish America had begun to shift from advocating self-governance within the Spanish Nation to accepting, when not actively supporting, full independence. Regional differences affected the timing of this shift in political objectives. Parts of the Constitution of 1812 and specific laws passed by the *cortes* galled numerous Americans. Some colonial officials, especially the *jefes políticos superiores*, the officials previously called viceroys, of New Spain and Peru, exacerbated these political problems by refusing to allow freedom of the press as decreed in 1810 and by negating local election results. Their selective enforcement of legislation undercut the legitimacy of the Spanish government. Despite rising violence between colonial authorities and local insurgents, in 1814 the elites in New Spain and Peru were still loyal to Ferdinand VII.

Ferdinand carefully ensured that Americans held seats on the Council of the Indies and in the American *audiencias* but quickly dispelled illusions of equality and refused to support a political solution to rebellions in the empire. Greeted on his return from France with widespread public enthusiasm and offers of military support, the monarch on May 4 nullified all acts of the *cortes*, including the Constitution of 1812. Additionally, he reestablished institutions and, insofar as possible, reinstated the officials in place at the time of his abdication. Although he promised to convene a *cortes* constituted as in the past, he never honored his pledge. Some leading liberals, including American deputies from New Spain, Peru, and Guatemala, had already been jailed before the monarch reached Madrid.

FERDINAND AND THE FAILURE OF ABSOLUTISM

Ferdinand's resumption of absolute authority put in bold relief the political institutions and rights developed in Spain and the colonies after the French invasion. Before this event, the elites of Spain and the colonies, like the rest of society, were loyal to the Bourbons and their "absolute" monarchy. To defeat the French, liberals at the *Cortes* of Cádiz fomented a political revolution that had turned Spain and its empire into a constitutional monarchy, albeit without a resident king, thus dividing the supporters of monarchy into constitutionalists and absolutists. This division extended to the Indies, where many creoles had responded enthusiastically to elections and open political discussion while rejecting more radical republican ideas and independence.

Ferdinand's return to the throne and his suppression of the constitution recast politics in Spain's American colonies. With the suppression of representation,

freedom of the press, and other political guarantees, public opinion in the Spanish colonies moved toward support for independence, a position popular in a few places, including Caracas, as early as 1811. Having rejected reform and compromise, Ferdinand then embarked on the dangerous course of using military force to impose subordination. This militarization of the conflict pushed colonial elites in “pacified” regions a step closer to independence. Property loss and harsh royalist reprisals in Venezuela, New Granada, Chile, and New Spain affected numerous elite families and undermined their earlier support of continued Spanish rule.

The failure of Ferdinand’s policy was clear by the end of 1819. The cost of sending and maintaining troops in the New World was greater than normal Crown revenues could support. Already in debt in 1808, royal treasuries throughout the Indies were awash in accumulated deficits a decade later. Wartime destruction and the breakdown of regular commercial links between Spain and its colonies had taken their toll. Mines were flooded, commerce was diminished, and colonial governments were nearly bankrupt. Chile, the future Argentina, and Paraguay were effectively independent, and northern South America was on the cusp of independence.

INDEPENDENCE IN SPANISH AMERICA

Colonial insurrections overlapped Spanish political experimentation that included juntas, an elected *cortes*, and a constitution that transformed the expectations of many active citizens in Spain and the Americas. Despite different chronologies, a number of similar characteristics were present in multiple theaters of the independence movements. These included an active press, localism and regionalism, economic crisis, a resort to arms, creole leadership, disease and desertion, insurgency and counterinsurgency, and borderless campaigns of conquest and liberation.

Spreading Revolutionary Ideas Through News and Propaganda

Despite efforts of the Spanish government to prevent the introduction of revolutionary ideas, they circulated in print and by word of mouth in Spanish America from the time of the successful revolt of the thirteen English colonies that formed the United States. Second-generation revolutions introduced more radical ideas from revolutionary France and, more ominously, Haiti. Starting in 1808, new publications appeared in Spain and the colonies and the press’s importance expanded rapidly. Spain’s alliance with England expedited the transfer of news, as numerous English ships carrying both English and Spanish publications arrived in colonial ports. Similarly, ships returning to Spain from Havana, Vera Cruz, Montevideo, and other ports carried accounts of revolutionary events in the Americas.

The Spanish *cortes* had approved freedom of the press on November 10, 1810, and included it in the Constitution of 1812. In applying the constitution, some Spanish officials in America used the free press to spread royalist propaganda. Others suspended implementation of the policy out of fear that a free press would encourage subversion. Their repressive actions had limited effect

local and regional control or for loot. Desertion rates were high, amnesties were frequent, and changing sides was common. Set-piece battles between armies were rare, and the armies themselves were very small in comparison with contemporary European standards. The royalists had 2,700 men at Boyacá, New Granada, in 1819 and the patriots had 2,800. At the largest battle of the wars at Ayacucho, Peru, in 1824, 6,000 republicans faced 9,300 royalists.

Although insurgent armies often had strong local roots, both insurgents and royalists frequently depended on recruits from distant areas. The royalist forces stationed throughout the colonies numbered about 35,000 in 1800, but only about 5,500 were European Spaniards. The 41,000 troops sent from Spain between 1811 and 1818 had an immediate impact but were quickly diminished by battlefield casualties, desertions, and disease. In the end, the willingness of colonials to fight for the king would determine whether or not Spain's mainland empire survived.

Patriot armies also depended on a mix of local recruits and volunteers drawn from a wide area. In January 1817, José de San Martín led an army across the Andes from Mendoza to Chile that was composed of political exiles from Chile, cowboys from the pampas, and units recruited in Buenos Aires that included large numbers of former slaves and freedmen. After winning the independence of Chile, San Martín sailed with his army, now reinforced by Chileans, to Peru in 1820. Similarly, Simón Bolívar led troops recruited in New Granada to combat Spanish forces in Venezuela. He later returned to New Granada to fight the Spanish loyalists with an army largely recruited in Venezuela. Along with his chief lieutenant Antonio José Sucre, Bolívar then led a mixed force of Venezuelans, New Granadans, and elements of San Martín's Argentine and Chilean army to liberate Peru and Upper Peru.

For the poorest members of Spanish colonial society, service in patriot or loyalist military forces could be the means of upward social mobility. Slaves and former slaves were important to both royalists and rebels, especially in Venezuela, New Granada, and the Río de la Plata. In some cases wealthy patriots gave male slaves to the army, and in others patriotic governments compensated owners who enlisted their slaves. Royalist commanders sometimes followed suit. Many slaves simply ran away from their masters to enlist; in some places, including New Granada, slaves came together and acted collectively to negotiate improved conditions and even emancipation. In Peru, nonwhites made up about 85 percent of the manpower of the royalist forces by the 1820s. Similarly, in 1821, nonwhites made up at least 60 percent of the royalist army in Venezuela. Insurgent armies at the same time were described as completely composed of "descendants from Africa"; although this observer probably overstated the African presence, free and enslaved blacks and *pardos* were numerically dominant in many regions. Whatever the exact number, nearly all slaves who served on either side of the conflict gained their freedom.

Indigenous troops were crucial to both sides of the conflict in the Andes and parts of New Spain as well. Indian communities had long been involved in imperial politics, but when Spanish officials and other loyalist groups in the colonies

organized resistance to juntas pressing toward independence, they provided an opportunity for indigenous communities to bargain for more power in exchange for their military service. Voting in repeated elections to select representatives for the *cortes* allowed Indians to participate directly in the political revolution supported by liberals and, in many ways, by royalists. As indigenous soldiers fought either for or against independence, they also gained first-hand knowledge of regions far beyond their villages and towns. Although both the *Cortes* of Cádiz and some patriot leaders abolished tribute and called for an end to other colonial obligations forced on Indians, their old labor and tax burdens often survived in disguised form for decades.

Irish, English, and other foreign adventurers were also important. Nearly 7,000 of these foreign adventurers enlisted in Bolívar's army alone between 1816 and 1825. Far from a body of veterans of the Napoleonic Wars, more than two thirds of them probably had no previous military experience; many went to Venezuela and New Granada for adventure; others intended to settle there after the fighting ended. Almost half of these volunteers, however, died of disease or while on campaign.

Disease and Desertion

Using soldiers far from their homes helped to reduce desertion rates, but it increased mortality due to change of climate, unsanitary temporary living arrangements, and disease. One of the worst locations was Vera Cruz, the port through which nearly all Spanish soldiers passed on their way to the interior of New Spain. Recurrent epidemics of yellow fever (*vómito negro*) at Vera Cruz proved deadly to thousands. Between 1815 and 1821, General Morillo and other royalist officers in Venezuela and on the coast of New Granada lost some 90 percent of their peninsular soldiers, most as a result of yellow fever, dysentery, smallpox, and other diseases and ailments. Foreign soldiers fighting under Bolívar's command experienced similar mortality rates. Of the Argentine and Chilean army of 4,500 that accompanied José de San Martín to Peru in 1820, only 100 men were still around to fight at Ayacucho in 1824.

American Leaders

The most influential insurgent leaders came from a range of occupations and social backgrounds. Almost all were born in the Americas, and over half were born in the 1770s and 1780s; this group included Simón Bolívar, José de San Martín, Manuel Belgrano in Buenos Aires, Agustín de Iturbide in Mexico, and Bernardo O'Higgins in Chile. The oldest, born in the 1750s, included the professional advocate of independence Francisco de Miranda, parish priest Miguel Hidalgo in New Spain, and Cornelio de Saavedra, a militia officer and leader of the first junta in Buenos Aires. The youngest, born in the 1790s, included students like Francisco Paula de Santander and Antonio José Sucre and a cattle trader in the interior plains of Venezuela, José Antonio Páez, all of whom became professional revolutionaries and, after independence, presidents of New Granada

and donated funds, delivered correspondence, aided recruitment and gathered information, accompanied husbands in military service, cared for the wounded, and, on one occasion, smuggled a printing press to the insurgents. All of these services involved substantial risk; in New Granada alone, royalists executed more than fifty women and imprisoned many more.

Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

Revolution, insurgency, civil war, and accompanying executions and atrocities touched nearly all of mainland Spanish America from northern Mexico to southern Chile. In Paraguay, armed conflict was brief. In Venezuela and New Granada, a generation came of age in the 1820s, having known little but conflict and violence. In Mexico, insurgency and counterinsurgency were unrelenting and forced much of the population to live in fear for a decade.

Both insurgents and royalist counterinsurgents relied on terror, summary justice and execution, "blood and fire," and atrocities to gain their ends. Insurgent atrocities against Spaniards in New Spain were under way on a large scale from the time Hidalgo's ill-disciplined forces murdered some 600 of them at Guanajuato in 1810. The royalists responded in kind: after executing and decapitating Hidalgo and his chief associates in 1811, they sent the severed heads on tour throughout the region that had supported the rebellion and then displayed the skulls in iron cages located at the four corners of the Guanajuato granary, site of the earlier massacre of Spaniards.

José María Morelos organized a disciplined military force that at its apogee controlled much of southern Mexico. Although Morelos oversaw the calling of a congress and the adoption of a constitution, his power was on the wane by late 1813 as a result of military losses. Morelos limited the use of gratuitous terror as an object lesson. Nonetheless, his forces often summarily executed captured royalist officers. On one occasion, a lieutenant tied two captured Spaniards to a tree and let them starve to death. Facing both Morelos's army and less restrained guerrilla forces in other parts of Mexico, royalist opponents continued to execute and decapitate rebels and to display their heads on pikes and to hang their bodies from trees. After capturing and trying Morelos, they executed him by firing squad. Spanish commander José de la Cruz articulated the extreme royalist position: "My system is to shoot hundreds by firing squads, to decimate the population of towns, and to make the name of the soldier as frightening as death itself."¹

Because insurgents and bandit gangs, often composed of demobilized soldiers, easily dispersed and disappeared into the general population of a town or region, royalists in Mexico used "flying detachments" of some 300 mounted troops. These swept through rebel territory to seize arms, horses, and livestock and to capture persons identified as rebels. Loyalist colonel Agustín de Iturbide also employed a scorched-earth policy and boasted of killing nearly 1,000 rebels in two months. General and later Viceroy Félix de Calleja on occasion completely destroyed towns that supported the separatists.



The execution of Miguel Hidalgo by Spanish firing squad.

The royalists often followed public executions with pardons or amnesties. Less than two months after the Hidalgo Revolt began, Calleja issued a pardon to rebels who would surrender, turn over their weapons, and identify their leaders. Not long after Hidalgo's defeat, Calleja declared that the insurrection was over, thus defining as criminals—"bandits, thieves, and delinquents"—and unworthy of pardon anyone who continued to struggle against Spanish forces. Nonetheless, royal pardons and even offers of general amnesty followed in succeeding years, a practice that allowed some insurgents to change sides repeatedly. Although the execution of Morelos in 1815 ended the most organized and persistent rebellion, guerrilla bands and bandits kept the royalists focused on counterinsurgency throughout much of Mexico for the remainder of the decade.

Venezuela also suffered extensive terror as both sides executed civilians and soldiers. One insurgent leader promised his men promotions in return for the severed heads of Spaniards and even sent a head to Bolívar, who repudiated this policy. After royalists captured and executed the headhunters, however, Bolívar in 1813 declared "war to the death" against any European who did not actively support the insurgency. Civil war was brutal, nasty, and relentless for over a decade.

Spanish South America: Borderless Campaigns of Conquest and Liberation

A defining feature of the military conflict between loyalists and separatists in much of Spanish South America was its territorial expansion beyond a single colony. With the defeat of the rebel government in Venezuela, Bolívar fled in

(Colombia), Upper Peru (Bolivia), and Venezuela, respectively. The most aristocratic and wealthiest were Simón Bolívar of Venezuela and José Miguel Carrera of Chile. Although most leaders were creoles, their ranks included the mestizo cleric José María Morelos in New Spain, *pardo* Manuel Piar in Venezuela, and *casta* José Antonio Páez, also in Venezuela. Only a few, including José Gervasio Artigas in Banda Oriental and Agustín de Iturbide in Mexico, had significant military experience prior to 1810; the most notable of these veterans was José de San Martín, who had entered the royal army in Spain as a cadet at the age of eleven, fought against the French in the early 1790s and again from 1808 to 1811, and retired at the rank of lieutenant colonel.

The names of many men who headed small groups of insurgents have escaped the historical record. In some theaters these guerrilla leaders proved more important than the leaders of large armies. This was especially the case in New Spain from 1810 to 1821 but also was true at times in Upper Peru, New Granada, and Venezuela. Within weeks of the onset of the Hidalgo Revolt in New Spain in September 1810, guerrilla bands were disrupting communication between Mexico City and Querétaro. Guerrillas also harassed traffic on the vital link between the capital and the port of Vera Cruz, forcing the royalists to use immense, slow, and expensive armed convoys.



A portrait of the Mexican independence leader Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla with a representation of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the background.

Two leaders of insurrection were heroic on a grand scale. “The Liberator” Simón Bolívar was charismatic, persistent, and able to appreciate the need to defeat Spanish loyalists in all of South America. His weaknesses included his impatience with the day-to-day work of governing and administering and his sometimes unreliable military skills. “The Protector” San Martín also understood the big picture, had excellent organizational and tactical skills, and effectively instilled discipline. His largest failure was his inability to gain the independence of Peru with forces overwhelmingly drawn from Argentina and Chile.

Mexico had more martyrs than heroes. Hidalgo’s Revolt lasted less than a year, although it initiated a decade of insurgency. José María Morelos, a *casta* priest who had studied with Hidalgo, inherited the insurrection in New Spain after Hidalgo’s excommunication and execution in 1811. He effectively trained an army and supported the drafting of a constitution but was captured and executed in 1815. Agustín de Iturbide, among the most effective officers in the Spanish forces in Mexico as they fought against Hidalgo and Morelos, achieved independence in 1821 through an alliance with autonomists and surviving patriots, but his attempt to create a Mexican empire with himself on the throne failed in less than a year. When he returned from exile in 1824, he was captured and executed.

Women in the Midst of War

Robbed and raped by soldiers; forced to watch the conscription or even execution of brothers, fathers, and husbands; required to leave their homes; and reduced to penury, many women suffered the consequences of civil war—often poverty and widowhood—without visible benefits. With large numbers of men enlisted in loyalist or patriot armies, women routinely bore the burden of overseeing businesses, farms, and ranches, in addition to their traditional obligations of managing households and children.

Some free and slave women took an active part in the conflicts as either royalists or insurgents. Although the First Republic turned down the offer of twenty-one women from Barinas, Venezuela, to join the republican army in 1811, it used the gesture as an example of patriotism to inspire others. Slave women embraced the opportunities presented by the political conflicts to provide services as cooks, servants, camp followers, and nurses, among other occupations, in the hope of gaining freedom. The mestiza Juana Azurduy of Chuquisaca, Upper Peru, for example, worked with her husband to enlist men and weapons for the cause of independence. She also led troops in battle and cared for the wounded. Among the most celebrated women in the republican ranks was Manuela Sáenz, Bolívar’s mistress. She participated as a soldier in the republican victories of Junín and Ayacucho in Peru, gaining promotion to the rank of captain after Junín. In New Spain, Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez, wife of the *corregidor* of Querétaro, contributed to the Hidalgo Revolt by informing conspirators that the government knew of the planned rebellion.

An educated minority of women participated in the lively debates that determined the future of their region. Others served as spies, attended meetings, raised

1812 to Cartagena in the temporarily independent New Granada. From that base, he launched a particularly brutal campaign into Venezuela in 1813. With creole support, Bolívar was initially successful and entered Caracas, where he oversaw the creation of a centralized republic. But the royalist *caudillo* José Tomás Boves emerged victorious in 1814 with the support of *casta* cowboys from the plains of Venezuela.

The recently restored Ferdinand VII sent a large military expedition under General Pablo Morillo to Venezuela. His forces entered Caracas in May 1815 and by October had pacified most of New Granada. To pay for this costly military venture, General Morillo confiscated and sold the property of well-known republican leaders and their noncombatant supporters. This harsh policy proved counterproductive because it forced the creole elite to see independence as the best guarantee of their property.

Although Bolívar was unable to gain British aid, he did find valuable new allies. Alexandre Petión, the president of Haiti, provided significant assistance in return for a pledge to abolish slavery. Bolívar also won the support of two groups that had previously provided the Venezuelan royalists with their most effective troops, *casta* cowboys of the interior, now led by José Antonio Páez, and free blacks.

A congress meeting in Angostura in the interior of Venezuela in 1819 declared the union of Venezuela, New Granada, and the still unliberated Ecuador in the Republic of Colombia—often called Gran Colombia by historians—and named Bolívar president. Even as the congress met, however, an audacious military campaign was determining the future of Venezuela and New Granada. Bolívar led an army over the Andes and defeated Spanish forces in New Granada at Boyacá, near the capital.

The southern prong of the wars of independence came through Chile, which San Martín had liberated with an army trained and recruited in present-day Argentina. In 1820 he sailed from independent Chile with an army and landed in Pisco, Peru. By this time, however, the political environment in Spain had changed, with important consequences for the separatists in America.

On January 1, 1820, Major Rafael Riego launched a military revolt in southern Spain among troops gathered for another large military expedition to the Americas. Bolstered by support in various cities of Spain, the revolt forced Ferdinand VII to accept constitutional government and triggered the final stage in the disintegration of Spain's mainland American empire. It was clear that Spain could not send another army to the Americas, and the new liberal government ordered commanders there to arrange ceasefires with the separatists.

In New Granada, Spanish General Morillo arranged a ceasefire with Bolívar and then departed for Spain, leaving the remaining royalist forces in northern South America under weak leaders. Although it took some time to defeat all pockets of royalist resistance, the armies under Bolívar and his lieutenants Páez and Sucre were henceforth virtually unstoppable. Victory at Carabobo in 1821 meant the liberation of Venezuela. Sucre's success in present-day Ecuador the following year determined that that region would also join Colombia.

The final military campaigns in South America took place between 1819 and 1825. San Martín forced the leading citizens of Lima to declare independence from Spain in July 1821 without fighting a major battle in Peru, but he failed to extend his authority to the interior, which an undefeated royalist army still controlled. Now titled “the Protector,” San Martín quickly found his new government in virtual bankruptcy and his army in no condition to confront the royalist forces.

Recognizing these problems, he sailed to Guayaquil and met with Bolívar to seek support. Soon afterward, San Martín resigned as Protector and went into self-imposed exile, leaving Bolívar and Sucre to complete the liberation of Peru and Upper Peru, called Bolivia after independence. Victories at Junín and Ayacucho



Portrait of Simón Bolívar at end of independence period.

in 1824 eliminated the royalist government and army in Peru. Sucre emerged victorious in Upper Peru the following year. In 1826 the last royalist bases in South America surrendered.

In Spanish South America between 1810 and the late 1820s, juntas, constituent assemblies, and congresses wrote foundational laws and constitutions to provide a framework for government; some twenty different codes were drafted in New Granada by the end of 1815, a majority for city-states such as Cartagena. Following explicit declarations of independence, constitutional republics quickly emerged as the governmental form favored by insurrectionists in New Granada and Venezuela. Although Manuel Belgrano advocated that the United Provinces of Río de la Plata become a constitutional monarchy with an Inca on the throne and although San Martín also favored a constitutional monarchy for Peru headed initially by a European prince, these ideas had few partisans relative to those favoring some form of constitutional republics.

New Spain: The Collapse of Empire

After Ferdinand VII accepted the constitution, in New Spain the restoration of provincial deputations and hundreds of constitutional municipal governments took place with little delay. Two sets of elections for deputies to the *cortes* were held in New Spain by March 1821. This last opportunity for autonomy within the Spanish Nation as earlier imagined by reformers proved fruitless and, in any case, was overtaken by the separatist solution.

After receiving news of Spain's return to constitutionalism, a small group of the Mexico City elite worked with Agustín de Iturbide, a creole officer in the royalist army, to obtain complete independence for New Spain. The Plan of Iguala, negotiated between Iturbide and surviving patriot leaders, was a masterful compromise that unrealistically offered the throne of an independent Mexico to Ferdinand VII and protected the interests of resident peninsulars, the Church, and the army. Besides providing for independence, it continued the authority of the Spanish Constitution of 1812 until a constituent assembly could write one specific to Mexico. The success of Iturbide's agreement with the patriots was ensured by the refusal of Mexican municipalities to collect the hated tax that had supported the counterinsurgency on the grounds that it was unconstitutional. The arrival of the new *jefe político superior* Juan O'Donojú, a Spanish liberal who supported autonomy, sealed independence without a major battle as many royalist officers backed Iturbide and the Plan of Iguala.

Because Spain refused to accept the independence of Mexico as agreed upon by Iturbide and O'Donojú, there was no opportunity to offer a crown to Ferdinand or any other member of the royal family. In unclear political circumstances, popular demonstrations organized and supported by the military led to the creation of a Mexican empire and the coronation of Iturbide as Emperor Agustín I. The empire collapsed, undercut by political divisions and fiscal crises, in less than a year. This led in 1824 to the creation of a federal and constitutional republic.

The Kingdom of Guatemala, the Spanish colony that would become the modern nations of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, remained generally peaceful during the early stages of insurrection in Mexico. Efforts to implement the Constitution of 1812 approved by the *Cortes* of Cádiz initiated a period of political conflict between liberals and conservatives. Despite some repression of liberal opinion, there was no open warfare. This changed with the Plan of Iguala and independence in Mexico. While some Central Americans proposed separation, most local governments accepted incorporation in the Mexican Empire. With the overthrow of Iturbide, an independent federal republic was declared for all of the former Kingdom of Guatemala with the exception of Chiapas, which was lost to Mexico.

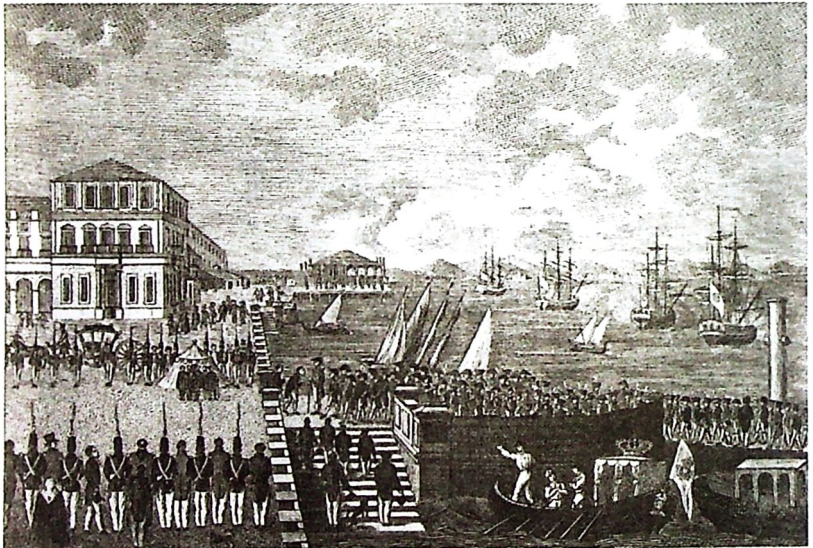


A portrait of Agustín de Iturbide.

PORTUGAL AND BRAZIL IN AN ERA OF REVOLUTION

With the royal court safely in Brazil, the Portuguese began to accommodate to the new order until word of the popular uprisings in Spain in 1808 sparked a popular revolt and the formation of patriotic juntas. Aided by substantial British military support, Portuguese volunteers cleared Napoleon's forces from most of the kingdom. New French invasions in 1809 and 1811 caused extensive property damage and perhaps nearly 250,000 Portuguese deaths. The nation's already weak transportation system was particularly hard hit, and as a result, commerce suffered. The cost of expelling the French encumbered the Portuguese treasury with debt and left the economy in crisis.

The decision of John VI, king after 1816, to remain in Brazil and elevate the former colony to the status of an equal kingdom created dissatisfaction in Portugal. As regent in the absence of John VI, British General William Carr Beresford's consistent sacrifice of Portuguese commercial interests prompted a rising tide of opposition. Even before the French invasion of 1807, Portuguese merchant houses had lost Atlantic market share to Brazilian merchants who now competed directly in the African slave trade and related commerce. Relocation of the Portuguese court to Rio de Janeiro further strengthened Brazilian merchants relative to Portuguese competitors. John VI's decision to open Brazil to direct trade with friendly nations, especially Great Britain, and the revocation of prohibitions on colonial manufacturing further confirmed the arrival of a new era, formalized in



DESEMBARQUE D'EL REI DOM JOÃO VI.

John VI returns to Lisbon.

a commercial treaty signed in 1810. Despite legislation designed to benefit Portuguese merchants and shippers, the old monopolistic system was gone, and trade between Brazil and Portugal plummeted between 1809 and 1813 to less than a third of its level between 1800 and 1804. As was the case with Spain, Portugal's empire had crumbled as an economic unit.

Political and economic subordination to Britain and anger over the monarch's decision to remain in Brazil stimulated a potent liberal opposition in Portugal, particularly among merchants in port cities and urban intellectuals. With the spread of Masonic lodges, military officers, many influenced by British colleagues, joined the opposition. In some rural areas, elements within the aristocracy were also unhappy with administration during the regency, although this group had little sympathy for liberalism.

In 1817 Beresford was informed of a conspiracy that included General Gomes da Freire, a leader of the Portuguese Masonic movement. Beresford quickly moved to crush this threat, executing the popular military officer. When news of the 1820 military mutiny in Cádiz reached Portugal, a rebellion began in Oporto. As the movement spread, liberal political leaders in Lisbon and Oporto established juntas and sought the return of John VI from Brazil.

John initially resisted the pressure to return to Portugal, as he correctly recognized that once in Lisbon he would be reduced to a constitutional monarch subject to the whims of a popular government. Simultaneously, competing factions within the military struggled for control of the junta in Lisbon. Eventually the Spanish system of indirect suffrage was used to elect members of a constituent *cortes* in 1821. The first representative assembly held in Portugal since 1689, the *cortes* wrote a constitution that acknowledged popular sovereignty and established a unicameral legislature. The king's power was greatly limited, but the Church and aristocracy retained many of their privileges.

John VI finally returned to Portugal in 1821. Despite his earlier fears, he only had to live with the liberal constitutional order briefly. Important elements within the Church hierarchy and the aristocracy fought to return to the old regime, and an "absolutist" rebellion began in remote areas of the country. When a French army invaded Spain in April 1823 to restore Ferdinand VII to absolute power, a conservative military revolt began in Portugal. The constitutionalist government quickly fell, and John again ruled without formal political constraint.

Brazilian Independence

The arrival of the royal court in Brazil in 1808 dramatically changed the colony's political life and economy. Access to the court and the possibility of gaining a title of nobility drew the colonial elite into the monarch's orbit. Even though many Brazilians came to resent the arrogance and privileged status of the recent arrivals, this anti-Portuguese sentiment did not seriously undermine support for the king.

As prince regent and, after 1816, king, John VI moved quickly to address some long-standing grievances. He opened the colony's ports to free trade, removed the prohibition of colonial manufactures, and dropped some import duties. The court

also helped stimulate colonial production by dramatically increasing the demand for goods and services. More than 20,000 Portuguese and thousands of other European immigrants arrived in the city of Rio de Janeiro alone between 1808 and 1822. As the urban population of the capital rose toward 100,000, demand for housing, food, locally manufactured goods, and services expanded as well. Even the urban masses experienced small improvements in employment and wages.

The court was costly, and local producers largely paid its expenses through taxation. Portuguese émigrés who held the highest administrative and military offices often enjoyed high salaries and luxurious lifestyles provided by royal patronage. But even though this was a period of general prosperity, some members of the Brazilian elite came to resent this forced subsidy. Because John yielded to British pressure and agreed to restrictions on the slave trade, he lost support among sugar, cotton, and coffee producers. As slave prices rose and the price of agricultural exports fell following the return of peace to Europe in 1815, political unrest spread in Brazil's agricultural sector. Finally, the cost of military intervention in Uruguay in 1811 and 1816 also proved unpopular.

Despite a growing undercurrent of dissatisfaction, there was only one significant Brazilian uprising against the monarchy. In Pernambuco in 1817, some planters, merchants, and churchmen joined what was basically a military rebellion. The leaders affected the customs of the French Revolution, addressing one another as "patriot" and offering the French constitution as a model for organizing government. This "republic" lasted less than three months. Once order was restored, additional troops from Portugal were brought in to garrison strategic points in Brazil.

Independence, however, did not result from the maturation of these colonial grievances or the spread of radical republicanism. Rather, events in Portugal destabilized Brazil. When Portuguese liberals summoned representatives to the *cortes* in 1820, Brazil was permitted to elect approximately 75 of the more than 200 delegates. Although a liberal perspective dominated the reform agenda in Portugal itself, the economic agenda favored the reestablishment of Brazilian dependency and commercial subordination. The *cortes* leadership sought to subordinate Brazil's economic interests by reestablishing the commercial system that had existed before the French invasion of Portugal.

John VI's position deteriorated when rebellious Portuguese soldiers in Belem created the first Brazilian junta in January 1821. In February the Portuguese garrison in Rio de Janeiro forced the king to reorganize his ministry and to accept the creation of juntas and the formulation of a liberal constitution. These events provoked a crisis among Brazilian political leaders. Although many supported the ideology of the Lisbon junta, they recognized that the loss of the court would mean a return to colonial status.

When John sailed for Portugal on July 26, 1821, he left his twenty-two-year-old son Pedro as regent in Brazil. These events made Brazilians more self-consciously nationalistic. The *cortes*'s decision to reestablish limitations on Brazilian commerce and to reinforce Brazilian garrisons with Portuguese troops fed this sense of Brazilian distinctiveness. As Portugal reasserted its domination, seven Brazilian

delegates to the *cortes* fled Lisbon rather than accept the new Portuguese constitution of 1822.

Events now moved quickly. In response to intense pressure, including a petition signed by 8,000 persons, Pedro refused the *cortes's* order to return to Portugal. The army in Brazil was purged of those soldiers and officers unwilling to swear allegiance to Dom Pedro, and troops sent from Portugal were denied permission to land. With the appointment of José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, a wealthy Brazilian with broad experience in Portugal, as head of a Brazilian cabinet, the break with the metropolis became inevitable. Although the other members of this advisory body were Portuguese, all were committed to maintaining Pedro in Brazil in defiance of metropolitan authority.

Substantial disagreement remained over the institutional form and political content of the developing movement toward independence. José Bonifácio tried to prevent dramatic political or social change, believing that monarchy was the best insurance against the chaos that had engulfed the neighboring republics of Spanish America. Although more radical leaders forced the creation of a Constituent Assembly, the imposition of indirect elections and limited suffrage guaranteed that this body would be compatible with José Bonifácio's conservative vision. The jailing or expulsion of leading radicals further strengthened the conservative leadership.

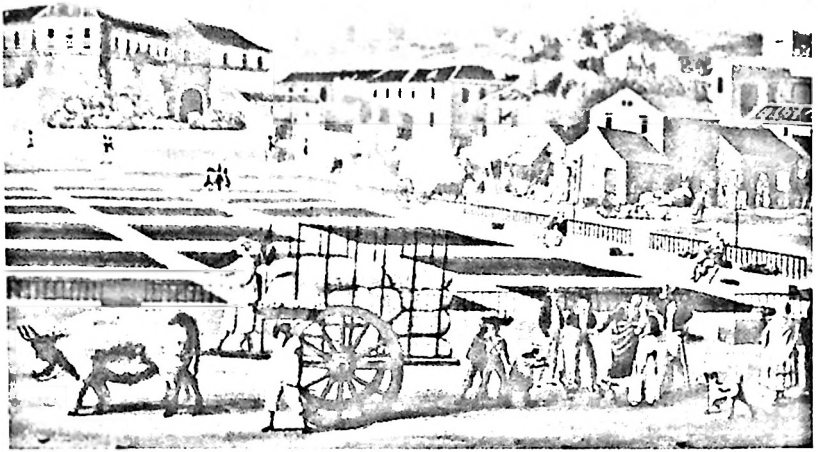
After May 1822 it was decided that decrees of the Portuguese *cortes* would not be enforced without Pedro's permission. In the same month the prince was given the title of perpetual protector of Brazil. Then in June all appointees to the civil service were required to swear support for Brazilian independence. Finally, the provincial governments were ordered to prevent individuals appointed by the Portuguese *cortes* from taking office. Brazil was effectively independent.

While the prince was traveling in São Paulo, his wife met with the Council of State to inform them that the Portuguese *cortes* was planning to send troops to Brazil, as it now regarded Dom Pedro and his advisers as traitors. Following the urging of José Bonifácio, Pedro declared Brazilian independence on September 7, 1822, and became Brazil's first emperor. The British government guaranteed the success of this bloodless movement by making clear to Portugal that it would not tolerate European military intervention in an independent Brazil.

CUBA: THE "EVER FAITHFUL ISLE"

In 1826 Spain retained only Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippine Islands as surviving outposts of empire. Cuba was economically and fiscally the most important possession and the beneficiary of a special relationship with Spain. Spared the turmoil of the 1810s and 1820s, Cuba's loyalty to the metropolis was strengthened by the arrival of royalist Spanish exiles from former colonies.

Cuba's sugar industry grew after 1765. By 1790 planters had purchased over 50,000 slaves. Sugar plantations rapidly increased from 10,000 acres in 1762 to over 150,000 acres three decades later. Further growth followed quickly after the slave revolution began in French Saint Domingue (Haiti) in 1791. The slaves' vengeance



Havana, Cuba, early in the nineteenth century.

was Cuba's opportunity, and its planters did not hesitate. Bolstered by higher sugar prices resulting from Saint Domingue's plummeting production and thousands of French planters who arrived with slaves, capital, and expertise, Cuban sugar exports roughly tripled by 1815 and continued rising for decades. Coffee exports grew from about 175,000 pounds in 1792 to over 4.4 million pounds in 1826.

Ferdinand VII's policy toward the Cuban elites continued the favorable treatment begun earlier. In 1815 he yielded to planters who wanted to clear previously protected forests to grow crops. He then abolished the long-lived tobacco monopoly and opened Cuban ports to world trade.

While the newly independent mainland countries struggled with economic devastation, fiscal insolvency, and political instability, the Cuban elites entered the second quarter of the nineteenth century expecting military and commercial benefits to continue. Their sensibilities were then offended when Cuba's colonial status was reaffirmed in 1836. Nonetheless, the Cuban elites continued to benefit from the island's direct relationship with Spain for much of the nineteenth century.

SPAIN AFTER THE LOSS OF THE MAINLAND EMPIRE

Spain emerged from French occupation confronting political and fiscal problems similar to those facing its former colonies after independence. Although in 1820 the Riego Revolt reestablished the Constitution of 1812, by the time the independence wars ended in the Western Hemisphere, Spain's second experiment with constitutional government was also over. Restored again to full monarchical authority

in October 1823, Ferdinand VII exiled liberal politicians but was unable to send a major expeditionary force to reestablish Spanish authority over the mainland colonies. The reality of fiscal bankruptcy forced him to listen to moderate schemes and rule more in the manner of an enlightened despot than a benighted reactionary. Indeed, he proved insufficiently conservative for some monarchists, who, among other things, deplored his failure to reestablish the Inquisition. The major political divisions that characterized Spain in the second quarter of the nineteenth century were within the monarchical tradition. This instability suggests that the Napoleonic invasion of 1808 had important long-term political effects on the mother country, as well as its empire.

Spain's loss of its mainland empire sealed the decline of the port of Cádiz initiated by the British blockade of 1797–1801. Loss of the colonies also reduced royal revenue in the short run by at least 40 percent, as remittances to the royal treasury and customs duties on trade with the mainland colonies ended. In terms of the Spanish economy as a whole, however, colonial independence had remarkably little impact. The overall decline in Spain's national income (money value of all goods and services produced in a year) resulting from colonial independence was probably no more than 2.5 percent. By the late 1820s, moreover, the temporary loss had been reversed by expanded Spanish exports that were 12 percent greater than during the heyday of "free trade within the empire." Thus European markets, supplemented by Spain's expanding trade with Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, quickly replaced the former Spanish mainland colonial markets. Spanish ports, notably Barcelona and Santander, were able to pursue successfully new and expanded commercial opportunities for Spanish products.

Despite the limited economic consequences of the loss of the mainland empire, Spain stubbornly refused to accept the independent existence of its former colonies. Ferdinand died without having granted diplomatic recognition to any of his former American realms. Spanish liberals and conservatives alike opposed acknowledging independence, and Spain only slowly began granting diplomatic recognition to the new countries. Mexico was first in 1836, followed by Ecuador in 1840 and Chile in 1844; Honduras was the last. Its recognition in 1895 barely preceded the loss in 1898 of the remaining islands of empire: Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines.

NOTE

1. José de la Cruz to Félix Calleja del Rey, Leon, Archivo General de la Nación, México, Sección de Operaciones de Guerra, 15 July 1811, vol. 145.

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CHAPTER 13

Epilogue

CHRONOLOGY

Date	Location	Event
1811-26	Americas	Independence of Spain's and Portugal's mainland colonies
1811-13	Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay	Begin gradual emancipation of slaves
1821-31	Republic of Mexico, Central America, Chile, Uruguay, and Bolivia	Abolition of slavery
1816-40	Paraguay	Dr. José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia <i>caudillo</i>
1824-25	Americas	Twenty-six British mining associations formed to do business
1826-28	Americas	Except for Brazil, all Latin American countries with foreign debt defaulted
1829	Mexico	Unsuccessful Spanish invasion
1829-52	Buenos Aires	Juan Manuel de Rosas <i>caudillo</i> of Argentina
1830	Gran Colombia	Independent Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador replace Bolívar's Gran Colombia; death of Bolívar
1830-37	Chile	Diego Portales <i>caudillo</i>
1830-48	Venezuela	José Antonio Páez <i>caudillo</i>
1833-55	Mexico	Age of Antonio López de Santa Anna
1836	Mexico	Secession of Texas
1836-39	Peru and Bolivia	Short-lived confederation
1838	Central America	United Provinces of Central America dissolves into independent states of Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and El Salvador
1846-48	Mexico	War with United States; Mexico loses more than half of its territory
1851-54	New Granada, Argentina, Peru, and Venezuela	Abolish slavery
1854	Peru	Abolition of Indian tribute (<i>contribución indígena</i>)
1857	Ecuador	Abolition of Indian tribute

The former colonies of Latin America faced the difficult process of organizing new governments, establishing internal order, and promoting economic growth. Despite the magnitude of these tasks, the political and intellectual leaders of the early stages of the independence era were generally optimistic about the future. This native-born elite, like the conquistadors and early European settlers, believed that Latin America was richly endowed by nature, and many foreign merchants and investors, particularly the British, shared this belief. According to these observers, Spanish and Portuguese rule, and especially their commercial limitations, had been the major impediment to material progress.



Map 8 Latin America in 1830.

Much of this optimism disappeared quickly as new nations faced the competing claims of regions, classes, colors, and ideologies. These divisions and conflicts immediately visible in the Spanish-speaking republics later appeared in Brazil in the 1830s, despite that nation's more peaceful transition to independence. The reduced authority and limited resources of newly independent governments, when compared with those of the colonial period, led to an increase in banditry and other forms of civil disorder. In response, the propertied classes, hoping to protect their wealth, supported, or at least encouraged, various forms of authoritarian rule.

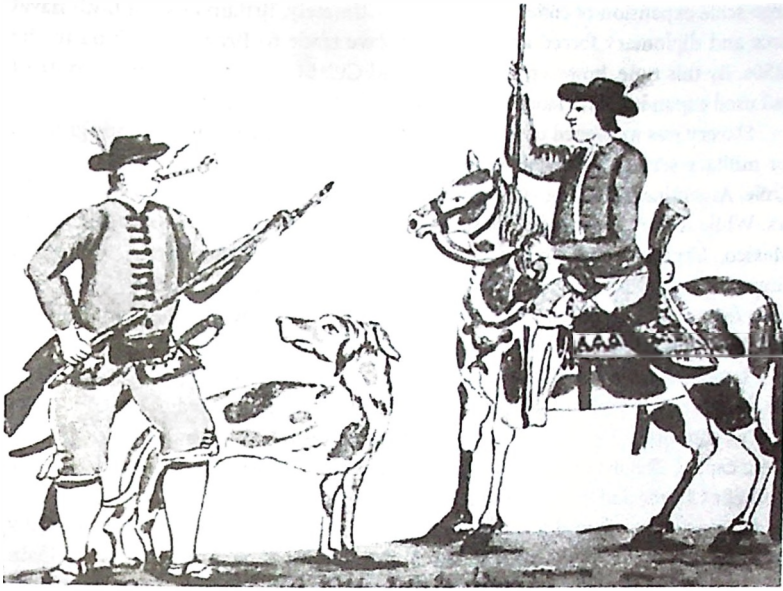
Early hopes for economic growth and prosperity also faded in the decades after independence. The wars for independence had been costly, and the loss of established imperial commercial ties had proven economically disruptive. Even where trade expanded and exports increased after independence, the benefits were not widely shared by the newly independent populations. In nearly every nation wealth was more concentrated at the end of the nineteenth century than during the colonial period.

THE ECONOMY

The establishment of political independence in Spanish America exacted a heavy price. By 1830 nearly every region was poorer than it had been in 1800. These economic costs were greatest in the mining centers of Mexico and the Andean nations of Peru and Bolivia, where silver production fell by two thirds. Plantation agriculture in Venezuela and Peru, the grazing industry of Argentina and Uruguay, manufacturing and cottage industries in Ecuador and Mexico, and internal trade throughout Spanish America also suffered economic reverses. Brazil's unique path to independence enabled it to avoid most of the economic and social dislocations that proved so costly to its neighbors.

Many economic problems the new nations faced were rooted in geography and natural resources or were structural legacies of centuries of colonialism. The destructive effects of the political conflicts and military campaigns that led to independence only heightened these problems. Because the international context within which Latin America's new leaders attempted to remedy these difficulties after 1825 was more dynamic, expansive, and unpredictable than before, prior experiences, existing institutions, and established practice were of only limited usefulness in the new era.

The independence of Latin America coincided with the first stage of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, and by the 1830s the competition of machine-made textiles had undercut the production of traditional hand weavers in former colonial textile centers. As the pace of industrialization accelerated in Europe and later the United States, Latin American nations became specialized suppliers of industrial raw materials, such as copper, tin, and hides, or of agricultural products, such as sugar, coffee, and tobacco. This increasing dependence on one or two export products made these economies vulnerable to fluctuations in world market prices. Thus a decline in the price of a country's principal export had the potential to devastate the national economy and provoke political unrest.



Frontier militiamen in Argentina.

Manpower requirements during the wars for independence affected mining and export agriculture more than subsistence farming. The actual loss of life was relatively light in comparison with Europe's experience during the Napoleonic Wars. Nonetheless, the dispersal of soldiers caused by the long-distance campaigns of San Martín and Bolívar, the migration of those seeking to leave or avoid military service, and the depredations of invading armies multiplied the disruptive effects of enlistment and conscription on the regional economies.

Prior to independence, peninsulars had made up only a minuscule percentage of the total workforce in colonial Latin America, but they were among the most experienced, best-trained members of the professional, commercial, and artisan classes. Through emigration, discrimination, expulsion, and loss of life, their productive energy was largely lost to these nations after independence. Losses also occurred at the bottom of the labor force. Both egalitarian ideology and practical political necessity led to attacks on all forms of compulsory labor by patriot leaders. Both San Martín and Bolívar, for example, abolished the forced labor of natives, the *mita*, in areas they controlled.

Nearly all the revolutionary governments in Spanish America sought to outlaw the African slave trade soon after independence. After ending its own participation in the African slave trade, Great Britain negotiated a number of treaties with the region's new governments to bring an end to this inhuman trade. Nevertheless, the widespread violation of these agreements in the 1830s and 1840s permitted the importation of nearly 500,000 African slaves to Brazil, facilitating the

large-scale expansion of coffee production. Ultimately, Britain's use of both naval force and diplomacy forced an end to the slave trade to Brazil and Cuba in the 1850s. By this time, however, both Brazil and Cuba (still under Spanish control) had used expanded slave labor forces to gain world market advantages.

Slavery was weakened in Spain's mainland colonies by manumissions granted for military service. Then, between 1811 and 1814, the patriot governments of Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay promised freedom to children born to slave mothers. While it took decades before slavery was finally abolished in Latin America, Mexico, Uruguay, and Bolivia ended slavery between 1829 and 1831. New Granada, Argentina, Peru, and Venezuela followed in the 1850s. The two nations most dependent on the labor of slaves, Cuba and Brazil, abolished slavery in 1886 and 1888, respectively.

Latin American nations also confronted the problem of depleted capital resources. To replace and restore production capacity damaged by the wars and to stimulate new growth, it was necessary to find large amounts of investment capital. The major sources of investment capital during the colonial era, the Catholic Church and the peninsular merchant community, were gravely weakened by expropriations, forced loans, and destruction during the wars. Many wealthy peninsulars had fled war-torn areas with their liquid capital, returning to Spain or sometimes settling in Cuba or Puerto Rico. During the era of civil wars and regional conflicts that followed independence, the Church remained under pressure because of its wealth. Although liberals and conservatives disagreed over the Church's role in education, intellectual life, and political discourse, both groups in the end forced it to subsidize government expenses.

Numerous rebel leaders and, after independence, new national governments relied on deficit spending. As a result, they commonly allocated customs duties and other revenues to debt service rather than to infrastructure improvements. Under pressure to stretch fiscal resources, governments debased their currencies and borrowed from foreign lenders. During the 1820s, Spanish American governments placed bonds with a nominal value of £18 million in Europe. After the cost of commissions and speculation, only about £10 million reached the borrowers. By 1828 all Latin American countries except Brazil were in default and without access to European credit.

Other resources were also lost during the wars. Both royalist and rebel armies had routinely expropriated crops and livestock. One reason that Miguel Hidalgo was able to recruit and sustain more than 50,000 followers was the coincidence of his rebellion with the Mexican grain harvest. When the opportunity presented itself, marauding soldiers from both sides seized horses, mules, cattle, wagons, carts, and tools. Sea and river transportation were similarly devastated. Blockades, the spread of privateering, and the breakdown of customary tax and tariff laws led to the loss or diversion of much of Spanish America's shipping capacity. Mines deteriorated or were flooded. In Mexico it took half a century to regain the level of mineral production of 1800, and the mines of Peru and Bolivia never recovered.



As competition increased from foreign manufactures, Latin American producers tried to find specialized local markets or used the labor of family members to stay competitive. Here a man and a woman work together as blacksmiths.

Sectors of the economy tied to the imperial commercial system, such as cacao and sugar production and silver mining, tended to suffer most during the wars. The greatest growth and most rapid recoveries occurred in the mineral and agricultural exporting regions that had natural linkages with the British and other expanding European markets. Among the sectors that flourished after independence were livestock, coffee, and copper. The high profits that resulted from the growing European passion for coffee, for example, led optimistic Venezuelan landowners to accept an interest rate of 15 percent to promote increased production in the 1830s. Many of these new or expanded exports were subject to periodic, often violent, price fluctuations. While prices were rising, Latin Americans invested heavily in

expanding production, often borrowing funds at high interest rates. The inevitable collapse in prices that followed the appearance of new producers or a change in European demand usually had devastating economic and political consequences for the Latin American countries. This cycle of boom and bust remained a characteristic of the region into the twentieth century.

Although by 1850 new exports and new markets had allowed most Latin American nations to overcome the economic costs of independence, the new economic order was in many ways more dependent on exports to Europe than the colonial system it replaced. In general the new national economies were less integrated and interdependent within the region than in colonial times. Large-scale unified political and economic systems such as the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata disappeared, and, as a result, formerly protected agriculture and industry disappeared, as well. Manufacturing and artisan production also fell throughout the region. One measure of these changes was the relative loss of the cities' economic importance. Only cities closely tied to the new export markets—Buenos Aires, Caracas, Havana, and Rio de Janeiro—escaped stagnation or decline in the decades immediately following independence.

The poor quality of transportation and communication inherited from the colonial regimes also hindered Latin America's development. Neither Spain nor Portugal had invested significant resources in infrastructure, and new national governments were commonly poorer and less efficient. As a result, roads, bridges, and harbors often deteriorated after independence, and postal services were slow and unreliable. Only the largest cities regularly had newspapers and periodicals available. Consequently, goods moved slowly and at great cost, and merchants bought and sold with minimal market intelligence. Merchants in the capital cities of Buenos Aires, Caracas, Mexico City, and Rio de Janeiro commonly knew more about market conditions in Europe than about conditions in interior cities a few hundred miles away. The shortage of local investment capital and the small size of domestic markets slowed the acquisition of the new technologies that dominated the nineteenth century. The steam engine, which had revolutionized manufacturing in much of Europe by 1830, entered Latin America very slowly, gaining importance only as an aid in draining mines before mid-century. As a result, textile production and metallurgy in Latin America remained wedded to technologies that had been in place for more than 200 years. Even such simple tools as steel plows were imported. Only in the last decades of the nineteenth century were national governments strong enough and wealthy enough to effectively support the development of telegraph and railroad systems.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL LIFE

Brazil's transition to independence was facilitated by the presence of a Portuguese prince in Rio de Janeiro. While monarchy would survive in Brazil until 1889, monarchical power was constrained by a constitution put in place in 1824. In Spanish America, however, the political transition from colonial rule was more dramatic

and more comprehensive. Virtually the entire edifice of the Spanish colonial order was scrapped, and few experienced high officials escaped dismissal within a few years after independence. The monarchical system that had provided legitimacy and continuity over 300 years was also scrapped, with the exception of Mexico's eight-month experiment. By the middle of the 1820s Spanish America was committed to a republican future and therefore to the creation of new constitutional and political practices.

Although monarchism found its supporters during the struggle for independence—San Martín and Iturbide being the most important—the political leadership in an independent Spanish America was generally republican in principle. The Spanish political revolution of 1808–12 had altered the nature of political identity by transforming colonial subjects into national citizens; independence underscored this difference. The achievements of Spanish liberalism—freedom of the press, democratic elections, and the Iberian world's first written constitution—helped set the agenda for the new governments of Latin America. As a result, first-generation constitutions affirmed the sovereignty of the people, created representative institutions, and sought to define individual rights. Nearly everywhere the election of representatives served to legitimize governments. And, more impressively, the right to vote was broadly defined—more broadly, in fact, than in the United States. While women and slaves were denied the franchise, almost all free, nondependent, adult males were initially granted the right to vote. Over time, however, elites used property and literacy requirements to limit voting rights of the poorest and most vulnerable, especially the indigenous peoples and former slaves.

In practice generous definitions of citizenship and voting rights did not guarantee democratic practices. O'Higgins, Bolívar, Páez, and Sucre, among others, accepted and exercised political authority and administrative power outside the limits established by constitutions. Representative institutions lost their importance as newly independent countries confronted centrifugal political threats. Local political loyalties destroyed Bolívar's vision of a Gran Colombia, subverted Central America's union with Mexico, and frustrated the recreation of a United Provinces of the Río de la Plata. In many cases real power was exercised by strong men, *caudillos*, who relied for their legitimacy on their clients and elite patronage rather than on elections and formal institutions. Some *caudillos* called themselves liberals, others conservatives, but few accepted formal constitutional limits to their authority. Among the many important *caudillos* were Juan Manuel de Rosas of Argentina, Diego Portales of Chile, José Antonio Páez of Venezuela, and Antonio López de Santa Anna of Mexico. Although all these leaders appeared as "great men" to admirers of their day, it is clear that their political importance resulted more from the relative diminution of centralized power and the reduction of state resources during the 1820s and 1830s than from their merits. While slowing the pace of institution building in many nations, *caudillos* often actively promoted the political integration of the masses in national political life.

Despite women's many important contributions during the struggles that led to independence, the first constitutions excluded them from active citizenship and

the right to vote and hold office. The new civil codes went even further in strengthening male authority in public life and in the family. Even in poor families in which adult males were denied the right to vote, fathers and husbands were granted legal authority over their wives and daughters that made the men, in effect, agents of the state. Legislation defined married women as minors and compelled them to accept their husbands' authority. Widows alone had some financial and legal independence, gaining the right to sign contracts and control their own property. Women's legal rights were expanded only slowly. Not until 1860, for example, did single mothers and widows in Mexico gain the right to direct their own families the way male family heads did.

The state retained economic importance after independence, although limited resources reduced and constrained ambitions. Only the government of Brazil retained a colonial-era ability to influence the allocation of resources. Even in this case Great Britain's preponderant position as a trading partner limited the government's freedom of action. Politicians in London rather than Rio de Janeiro, for example, made the initial decisions that ended the slave trade. Virtually no independent government in Latin America was able to create and collect taxes as efficiently as its colonial predecessor. With the abolition of most colonial-era production and consumption taxes, Latin American governments by 1850 received nearly 80 percent of their revenue from customs duties and export taxes. These taxes inhibited regional trade; further disrupted colonial patterns, such as Chilean wheat exports to Peru; and advanced Spanish America's integration into the European market. In an extreme but not unique case, the provincial governments in Argentina imposed tariffs on one another's trade, effectively ending progress toward an integrated national market.

Nevertheless, the state remained the largest single employer and consumer. Thus it could expand or restrict consumption and production through budgetary decisions. In general, all Latin American nations lagged far behind Europe and the United States in providing an environment suitable for commercial and industrial investment. In some cases Latin American governments established central banks and promoted the creation of insurance companies in imitation of practices in Europe and the United States. But these efforts were nearly always limited in scope, and many were soon abandoned. New national monetary systems also proved less stable than the silver-based colonial system. In Argentina, for example, paper money quickly led to inflation; in Brazil the issuance of copper coins produced a similar result. Unpredictable government policies and fluctuating markets increased investment in property rather than in more risky enterprises.

After independence, the political importance of the military grew as civilian authority declined. Although current or former military officers often held executive power, political life was not militarized. In an era of civil war, regional secessionism, and ideological conflict, political peace could result only from the efforts of leaders capable of organizing and asserting military force. However, few successful military men of this period politicized or even professionalized the military. José Antonio Páez, the Venezuelan revolutionary-era military hero and later

president, actually reduced the regular army to 800 men in 1838. Juan Manuel de Rosas, the Argentine *caudillo* of the 1830s and 1840s, refused for fifteen years, despite inflation, to increase the nominal pay of officers and enlisted men. It was the increased importance of regional militias and other irregular military forces, not politicized regular armies, that changed political life in Latin America. This new military phase, often accompanied by violence, resulted from a breakdown in public order and weakened central authority that tended to elevate the relative political weight of even small, poorly armed military forces. At root Latin American federalism was as much a military fact of life as it was an ideology.

The status of the Church became a bitterly divisive issue in the decades following independence. This conflict began with the Bourbon monarchs' efforts to subordinate the Church to secular authority, a process made clear by the expulsion of the Jesuits from both Portuguese and Spanish realms. Clerical immunity from secular jurisdiction in criminal and civil cases, sanctuary, and control of patronage remained unresolved when colonial rule ended. New conflicts over secular education, religious freedom, and the Church's wealth effectively established the boundaries that separated conservatives and liberals after independence. Finally, the papacy's efforts to reassert patronage rights in Latin America proved an incendiary issue, as new political elites sought to create a compliant and supportive episcopal structure. In many nations, Mexico and Colombia, for example, these struggles proved to be major obstacles to the development of stable national governments.

SOCIAL CHANGE

Independence brought about significant social change, even though elements of the colonial past persisted. With independence, those born in the Americas claimed the highest positions in government and military. Transition to local control took much longer in the Catholic Church, with some high-ranking episcopal positions still held by Europeans at the end of the nineteenth century. The social consequences of economic transformation were more complex. Nearly everywhere wealth became the primary denominator of social status as the export-led economies of these new nations elevated the status of the owners of ranches, plantations, and mines. British and other European merchants and investors resident in Latin America served as vectors of social and cultural change.

In many new nations, local-born rural elites tied to export agriculture used their mounting wealth to assert political and cultural power. As a result, rural social norms and manners gained wider acceptance, leading nations like Argentina and Brazil, among others, to adopt a romanticized version of the large rural estate as a national cultural ideal. Nevertheless, even where rural enterprise came to dominate national economies, the richest ranchers, plantation owners, and mine owners maintained opulent households in the major urban centers, as had similar groups in the colonial period. Despite the political and economic revolutions that transformed Latin America, metropolitan centers continued to dominate the region.

Cities also served as unpredictable social and cultural laboratories as native-born migrants from towns and villages mixed with temporary European residents and, after the 1830s, with increased numbers of European immigrants. This process was most visible at the upper levels of these societies, where commercial and professional sectors embraced foreign fashions and ideas, even while they patriotically objected to the aggressive exertion of economic, diplomatic, or military power by European governments. But significant cultural change occurred among the middle and laboring classes as the native-born sampled and adapted foreign foods, sports, and political ideas and as immigrants assimilated via language, political mobilization, and marriage with the native-born. This mounting foreign influence helped generate a reciprocal, sometimes defensive, interest in local history, including heroic depictions of the indigenous past and literary and musical evocations of what were proclaimed to be authentic national themes and customs. The combined effect of these two powerful cultural phenomena combined to weaken the still-important influence of Iberian traditions inherited from the colonial past.

Many mixed-race officers of the revolutionary armies achieved substantial upward social mobility. By the 1850s a number of dark-skinned men had gained political and economic power, and a handful had become presidents. While mixed-race men and women found new opportunities after independence, color prejudice and active discrimination survived everywhere. Despite persistent racism and cultural prejudices, every independent Latin American country experienced some social change. Nevertheless, the social order imposed initially by conquest and the African slave trade persisted throughout most of Latin America, particularly in rural areas. As economies began to grow again in the 1830s and 1840s, increased numbers of foreign immigrants were drawn to Latin America, with Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay receiving the most.

Independence was an important watershed in the history of Latin America. In political and economic terms, the region became both more dynamic and more vulnerable than in the colonial era. The difficult transition to republican institutions and a broader participation in political life, coupled with the increased economic volatility associated with greater dependence on export markets, fed regional political instability to the 1850s and beyond. Underlying these changes were the vestigial social and economic structures inherited from the colonial era. Nevertheless, by the end of the nineteenth century every nation in Latin America was richer, more fluid socially, and more democratic than in the colonial era.

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A Note on Periodical Literature and Suggested Readings

A voluminous periodical literature continues to enrich the field and offers students and professionals important additions to other publications. The most useful English-language historical journals are *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, *The Americas*, and *Colonial Latin American Historical Review*. Many historical articles are also found in the interdisciplinary journals *Colonial Latin American Review*, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, and *Latin American Research Review*. Students who want to pursue ethnohistorical literature should check *Ethnohistory*. The *Handbook of Latin American Studies* provides a good annotated guide to current books and articles.

The Suggested Readings refer almost exclusively to books published from 1990 to the present. We encourage students who want to pursue specific topics in greater depth by reviewing older literature to use the *American Historical Association's Guide to Historical Literature*, 3rd edition (Oxford University Press, 1995), volume II. Sections 36 to 38 provide references to both periodical and book literature related to native peoples of the Americas and Latin America before and after 1800. Charles C. Griffin's (ed.) *Latin America: A Guide to the Historical Literature* (1971) is a landmark evaluation of materials published until the late 1960s.

The bicentennial of the beginning of Spain's War of Independence in 1808 has fostered substantial scholarly attention to both events in Spain and the political revolution and subsequent independence in the Spanish colonies. A recent historiographical review is Gabriel Paquette, "The Dissolution of the Spanish Atlantic Monarchy," *The Historical Journal* 52:1 (2009), pp. 175–212.

Glossary

- Aguardiente de caña.* An alcoholic beverage distilled from sugar cane.
- Alcabala.* A sales tax.
- Alcaldía mayor.* An administrative province or district.
- Aldeias.* In Brazil, reconstituted Indian communities associated with Christian conversion.
- Alternativa.* The rotation of clerical offices, especially in regular orders, between peninsulars and creoles.
- Asiento.* A monopoly contract to import slaves to the Spanish colonies.
- Audiencia.* A high court and advisory body to a regional chief executive in the Spanish colonies; similar to a *relação* in Brazil. Also the territorial jurisdiction of such a court.
- Auto de fé.* An act of faith; a public or private event at which the Inquisition decreed punishment of transgressions.
- Ayllu.* The basic kin groups in the Andean region; family units claiming ties to a common ancestor.
- Ayuntamiento.* A municipal council, also known as a *cabildo*.
- Bandeira.* A Brazilian expedition to capture Indian slaves.
- Bandeirante.* A participant in slaving expeditions against Indians in Brazil. São Paulo was the most common origin.
- Barrio.* An urban neighborhood or district.
- Batab.* A term for a native chieftain in Yucatan.
- Boucan.* A grill for roasting meat over a fire.
- Caballero (cavaleiro).* A knight; the highest category of untitled nobles.
- Cabildo.* A municipal council, also known as an *ayuntamiento*.
- Cabildo abierto.* An extraordinary meeting of *cabildo* (q.v.) attended by representatives of the Church, other governmental institutions, and members of the economic elite.
- Caboclos.* In Brazil, a person of mixed Indian and white ancestry.

- Cacique*. An Indian chieftain, usually hereditary. Known as a *kuraka* in the Andes and a *batab* in the Mayan region.
- Calpulli*. An Indian clan in Mesoamerica; the basic social and economic unit.
- Capitulación*. A contract between the Castilian Crown and a private citizen, usually outlining terms of exploration, conquest, and settlement.
- Casa de Contratación*. The House of Trade established in Seville in 1503, moved to Cádiz in 1717, and abolished in 1790. Oversaw Spanish trade with the colonies.
- Casa grande*. The "big house," or owner's residence on a Brazilian plantation.
- Casta*. A person of mixed racial background, which included African ancestry or the suspicion of it because of illegitimacy.
- Chicha*. An Andean alcoholic beverage often made from corn.
- Cofradía*. A lay religious brotherhood.
- Colegio*. A secondary school in the Spanish colonies and Brazil.
- Comarca*. A territorial jurisdiction in Brazil.
- Compadrazgo*. Godparentage.
- Comuneros*. Supporters of a popular revolt. In Spanish America, rebels in Paraguay in 1720s and 1730s and in New Granada in 170.
- Congregación*. Also known as a *reducción*, or, in Brazil, an *aldeia*. A resettlement of Indians by Spaniards to aid in the Indians' conversion to Christianity.
- Consulado*. A merchant guild.
- Converso*. A convert to Christianity; usually applied to a converted Jew or a "New Christian."
- Corregedor*. A provincial administrator employed in Portugal.
- Corregidor*. A magistrate and chief administrative officer for a provincial jurisdiction. In much of Spanish America, the Spanish official charged with the administration of Indian communities.
- Corregimiento*. An administrative province or district.
- Creole*. A Spaniard born in the New World.
- Cue*. An Aztec temple.
- De capa y espada*. Here, a minister on the Council of the Indies who has not had university training in law.
- Doctrina*. An Indian parish.
- Don, Doña*. Lord; a title rare in the conquest but subsequently more commonly used.
- Encomendero*. The holder of an *encomienda* (q.v.).
- Encomienda*. A grant of authority over a group of Indians. It carried the obligation to Christianize and protect them in exchange for labor services and/or tribute.
- Engenho* (*Sp. ingenio*). The Portuguese term for sugar mill. Refers to the complete operation, including the physical plant, land, and slaves.
- Español*. A Spaniard born in the Old or New World; refers to both peninsulars and creoles.
- Fazenda*. The Brazilian term for *hacienda* (q.v.).
- Fiscal ladino*. Assistant to a parish priest in native villages.
- Flibustier*. The French term for buccaneers.

- Flota.* The fleet that sailed from Spain to Vera Cruz.
- Forastero.* An outsider; a person residing in a region other than where born.
- Fueros.* Special judicial privileges enjoyed by a particular group—for example, ecclesiastical *fueros*.
- Galeones.* The fleet that sailed from Spain to Cartagena and Panama.
- Gaicho.* A cowboy, usually of mixed ancestry, in the Río de la Plata. Known as *llanero* in Venezuela and *vaqueiro* in the Brazilian backlands.
- Gobernación.* An administrative province or district.
- Hacendado.* The owner of a *hacienda* (q.v.).
- Hacienda.* A large estate devoted to livestock raising or agricultural activities. Known as a *fazenda* in Brazil.
- Hermanidad.* The Holy Brotherhood; a league of law officers hired by municipalities in Spain.
- Hidalgo* (*fidalgo* in Portuguese). An untitled noble.
- Hidalguía.* A Castilian aristocratic ideal of nobility.
- Huaca.* A native Andean god; often thought of as an ancestor. Commonly represented as hills, stones, water, or mummies.
- Ingenio.* See *engenho*.
- Inquilinaje.* Peonage based on tenancy common in Chile.
- Jefe político superior.* The highest colonial administrative officer in the reorganized system created in the Constitution of 1812, replacing the viceroy.
- Jornal.* A daily wage.
- Khipus.* Multicolored knotted strings that served as memory aids in prequest Peru. Also known as *quipus*.
- Kuraka.* See *cacique*.
- Labrador.* The person who works the small property he owns or rents.
- Ladino.* The Central American term for *mestizo* (q.v.); also an Indian fluent in Castilian.
- Lavradores de cana.* In Brazil, sugar cultivators who depended on an *engenho* for processing. Many were sharecroppers.
- Limpieza de sangre.* Blood purity; the absence of Jewish or Muslim ancestors.
- Llanero.* See *gaicho*.
- Llanos.* The southern plains of Venezuela.
- Macehual.* A Mexica commoner with access to land.
- Mameluco.* The offspring of Portuguese and Indian parents.
- Máscara.* A parade of costumed men and women.
- Mayeque.* A commoner in Aztec Mexico without access to land.
- Mayorazgo.* An entailed estate.
- Mazombo.* A Portuguese born in Brazil.
- Media anata.* Tax paid by officeholders, half of their first year's salary.
- Mesta.* The sheep owners' guild.
- Mestizo.* The offspring of Spanish and Indian parents.
- Ministro togado.* Here, a minister on the Council of the Indies with university training in law; so named because he wore the robe (*toga*) of the judiciary.

- Mita*. The colonial forced labor draft that provided Indian workers on a rotational basis. Most common in mining in Peru. Adapted from an Inka precedent.
- Mitayo*. An Indian forced to serve in *mita* (q.v.).
- Mitmaq*. The Indian colonizers in Andean Peru sent to exploit an ecological zone or to help secure a conquered region.
- Mulato*. Offspring of black and white or, in some regions, black and Indian parents.
- Obraje*. A primitive factory commonly used to produce textiles in Spanish colonies. Usually dependent on forced labor.
- Palenque*. A fortified hamlet of runaway slaves in Spanish America; called *quilombo* in Brazil.
- Pampa*. The plains of Río de la Plata.
- Panaca*. A deceased Inka's male descendants other than his chosen heir.
- Pardo*. A *mulato* (q.v.)
- Patio process*. A means of refining silver through its amalgamation with mercury.
- Patronato real*. Royal patronage over the Church. The right to nominate for Church offices and supervise Church administration.
- Peninsular*. A Spaniard born in Iberia.
- Peso*. A coin and monetary unit in Spanish America. The silver peso was valued at eight *reales* of silver.
- Pieza de Indias*. An accounting term in the Spanish slave trade. A male slave without physical defects between fifteen and forty years of age. Women and children were calculated as fractions of a *pieza*.
- Pipiltin*. Hereditary Mexica nobility.
- Plata*. Silver.
- Pochteca*. Long-distance merchants in Aztec Mexico.
- Presidio*. A frontier garrison.
- Pulperia*. A small retail shop.
- Pulque*. An alcoholic beverage made from maguey, popular in Mexico before and after the conquest.
- Quilombo*. See *palenque*.
- Radicado*. A Spaniard long resident in the colonies. The term suggests someone who is well connected with local interests through marriage, friendship, and business associations.
- Recôncavo*. The area surrounding Bahia's Bay of All Saints.
- Repartimiento*. The allocation of an Indian chieftain and his people to a Spaniard to provide labor; a forced labor draft (known as *mita* in Peru).
- Repartimiento de bienes*. The forced sale of merchandise to Indians by Spanish officials.
- Requerimiento*. The "requirement"; a statement read to Indians before battle urging them to accept Christianity and allegiance to the Castilian Crown; their failure to do so justified war on them.
- Residencia*. The judicial review of an official's conduct in office.
- Sertão*. The backland of Brazil.
- Sirvinacuy*. An Andean term for trial marriage.

Tlatoani. A "king" in preconquest central Mexico.

Traza. The rectilinear core of a colonial city.

Vaqueiro. See *gaucho*.

Vecino. A citizen of a municipality.

Visita. An official inspection into the conduct of bureaucrats, usually unscheduled and unexpected.

Yanacona. A native retainer or laborer bound to an overlord in the Andean region.

Yerba. An herbal tea indigenous to Paraguay.

Yunga. An Andean term for a warm, low-altitude zone.

Zambo. Offspring of black and Indian parents.

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Monarchs of Spain and Portugal

RULERS OF SPAIN, 1454-1833

TRASTÁMARA DYNASTY

Henry IV of Castile	1454-74
Isabel of Castile	1474-1504
Ferdinand of Aragon ¹	1479-1516
Philip I ²	1504-06
Juana of Castile ³	

HABSBURG DYNASTY

Charles I	1516-56
Philip II	1556-98
Philip III	1598-1621
Philip IV	1621-65
Charles II ⁴	1665-1700

¹ SON OF JOHN II, KING OF ARAGON, 1458-79; MARRIED ISABEL OF CASTILE IN 1469.

² SON OF THE HABSBURG RULER MAXIMILIAN I; HUSBAND OF JUANA OF CASTILE; AND FATHER OF CHARLES I, KING OF CASTILE AND ARAGON AND HOLY ROMAN EMPEROR (1519-56).

³ DAUGHTER OF FERDINAND AND ISABEL, HER INSANITY ALLOWED FERDINAND OF ARAGON TO RULE AS REGENT OF CASTILE UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 1516.

⁴ DIED WITHOUT A NATURAL HEIR NAMED PHILIP OF ANJOU AS HIS SUCCESSOR.

BOURBON DYNASTY

Philip V	1700-24
Louis I ⁵	1724
Philip V	1724-46
Ferdinand VI	1746-59
Charles III ⁶	1759-88
Charles IV	1788-1808
Ferdinand VII ⁷	1808-33

⁵ BECAME MONARCH UPON THE ABDICATION OF FATHER, PHILIP V. LOUIS'S DEATH BROUGHT PHILIP V BACK TO THE THRONE.

⁶ HALF-BROTHER OF FERDINAND VI.

⁷ ASSUMED THRONE UPON HIS FATHER'S ABDICATION. NAPOLEON FORCED FERDINAND'S ABDICATION IN 1808 AND PLACED JOSEPH BONAPARTE ON THE THRONE. FERDINAND RETURNED AS MONARCH IN 1814.

RULERS OF PORTUGAL, 1438-1826

AVIS DYNASTY

Alfonso V	1438-81
John II	1481-95
Emanuel I	1495-1521
John III	1521-57
Sebastian I	1557-78
Cardinal Henry	1578-80
Philip I ¹	1580-98
Philip II ²	1598-1621
Philip III ³	1621-40

¹ ALSO PHILIP II OF SPAIN.

² ALSO PHILIP III OF SPAIN.

³ ALSO PHILIP IV OF SPAIN.

BRAGANZA DYNASTY

John IV	1640-56
Alfonso VI	1656-68
Peter II ⁴	1668/1683-1706
John V	1706-50
Joseph I	1750-77
Mary I	1777-99
John VI ⁵	1799/1816-26

⁴ REGENT, 1668-83; KING, 1683-1706.

⁵ REGENT AS A RESULT OF MARY I'S MENTAL ILLNESS FROM 1799-1816; KING, 1816-26. MOVED COURT TO BRAZIL IN 1808; ELEVATED BRAZIL TO RANK OF KINGDOM IN 1815; AND RETURNED TO PORTUGAL IN 1821.

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