

Healing Power: Land-Surveying Politics and the Archive of Mendoza's America (1535-1552)

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Resumen: Durante las últimas dos décadas, el archivo colonial se ha percibido principalmente como un medio que servía a la administración imperial para controlar sus territorios y someter a sus habitantes. Este ensayo trata de cuestionar esta comprensión de la relación entre el conocimiento y la experiencia práctica en la elaboración de la política colonial. Centrándonos en la participación del primer virrey de la Nueva España, don Antonio de Mendoza, en la agrimensura, se analiza cómo sus ideales y aspiraciones políticas influyeron en el desarrollo del archivo colonial y virreinal y cómo estas, a lo largo del tiempo, causaron un conflicto entre él, el monarca y sus consejeros.

Palabras clave: Archivo, agrimensura, conocimiento, experiencia, nobleza, administración imperial, Nueva España, siglo XVI.

Abstract: During the last two decades, the colonial archive has been perceived as a means for the imperial administration to control its overseas territories and to subjugate its inhabitants. This essay questions such an understanding of the relationship between knowledge and practical experience in the making of colonial policy. Focusing on the surveying activities of New Spain's first viceroy, Don Antonio de Mendoza, an analysis is made of how his political ideals and aspirations influenced the development of the colonial and viceregal archive, and how these, eventually, would lead to a conflict between him, the monarch, and his advisers.

Keywords: Archive, surveying, knowledge, experience, nobility, imperial administration, New Spain, 16th century.

Introduction

In 1550, the viceroy of New Spain – Don Antonio de Mendoza – criticized the Crown's inability to manage its American affairs. In an instruction for a representative travelling to the court on his behalf, he wrote that, during the preceding decade-and-a-half, the Crown had been unable to comprehend his necessities and that of the viceroyalty's inhabitants. It was as if the king, his advisory councils, and the clergy had united forces in an attempt to 'ruin' the Indians and to thwart the development of the overseas kingdoms (Hanke 1980: 57-58). Again and again they had burdened the inhabitants of the Indies with revised and contradictory laws – made and enforced by incomprehensive royal officials who did not possess any experience in a 'new' world so much unlike their own. What had the king expected to happen, he asks, when the members of the Council



of the Indies were allowed to think they understood the Americas without having any actual experience in this world but for them to act like “los físicos que nunca les dan dineros si no es cuando hay enfermos, y si no sangran y purgan no entienden que curan” (Hanke 1980: 57).

During the last two decades, the issues Mendoza raised about the transfer and use of situated knowledge within the imperial administration have attracted much scholarly attention. Historians have argued that exploration, mapping, and surveying allowed colonial authorities to identify and assume control over the available resources, determine property relations, and gather knowledge of the territory and its inhabitants (Bustamente 2000; Craib 2000; Barrera Osorio 2006; Portuondo 2009). Others have emphasized that the production of the knowledge was stimulated by the great need for the administration of justice among the inhabitants of the overseas regions (Brendecke 2009; Ruiz Medrano 2010). This paper takes a different direction, however. It explores how the question of how to use local knowledge in the colonial administration sparked fierce debates about the position of the viceroy, in particular, and the functioning of the Empire, in general.

I argue that the viceroy's attempts to regulate the surveying activities and the formation of the viceregal archive not only helped him to reorganize the viceroyalty's socio-political order, but it also allowed him to define his relative autonomy from the Crown. Using different textual and visual descriptions of the American space, its people, and its nature, I will demonstrate that Mendoza's efforts to transform and manipulate the vocabulary, rules, and practices related to diverging archives of spatial knowledge were essential for the success of his political project, both within the viceroyalty and at the court. In order to provide a better insight into the viceroy's own ideological standpoint and the political practices he applied, this article will first of all place Mendoza within a more general context of the culture of knowledge that existed in Castile at the time. Subsequently, it will be explored how this background affected images of the city “*Temistitán*”, or Mexico-Tenochtitlan, which were produced and diffused through imperial information networks. Finally, it will be analyzed how Mendoza struggled to maintain his political and cultural authority and used his descriptions of the New World to present his cure for the ailments of which the body politic suffered.

Knowledge, spaces, and the archive

The development of a culture of empirical, experimental and utilitarian knowledge-gathering has become an important topic in recent literature about the Spanish Empire. Historians studying the circulation of knowledge in the Atlantic World have used the progressive body of knowledge produced by both expert and non-expert informants to underline the Iberian contribution to the emergence of modern science and the Scientific

Revolution (Harris 1998; Cañizares-Esguerra 2004). New practices that were developed in the context of the overseas provinces and within the centers for the concentration of the collected knowledge, like the Casa de la Contratación in Seville, were perceived in terms of an emerging modernity. Focusing on the efforts of the imperial state to comprehend and appropriate colonial subjects and territorial resources, they argued, as Antonio Barrera did, that “early modern empires and science were born together” (2006: 40).

Though contemporaries were aware that they had surpassed one of their principle sources, the classical authorities, when it came to their empirical knowledge of the world (Myers 2007: 33-34), the emphasis on the modern character of the culture of knowledge has obscured, to some extent, the more traditional ideals and mechanisms guiding social actors. From at least the early thirteenth century, Castilians had celebrated prudence and being well informed as indispensable virtues for the persons in public office. Writing about the matter, Alonso de Cartagena, a renowned fifteenth-century specialist in educational theory, stated, for example, that:

No que diga que todos sean letrados ca la governaçion de la cosa publica no lo padescer porque muchos son neçesarios para labrar la tierra e otros para defender e algunos para negoçiar e otros ofiços e artiçios que gobiernan e facen hermosa la çivilidad, pero cada uno en sy deve querer e preçisar el saber (Cartagena 1996: 155-156).

Such an ideal was representative for a culture of knowledge that was characterized by a rough blend of empiricism and pragmatism, and that maintained an intimate relationship with the political practice. It was commonly believed that authoritative knowledge recorded in chronicles, law codes, and practical manuals, among other sources, provided guidance and example of right conduct, especially for those trying to fulfill their civil duties (Lawrence 1979). At the same time, knowledge of a more empirical nature was considered an indispensable prerequisite to weigh contradicting opinions, judge the qualities of an individual or collective, and reward them accordingly.

These assumptions about the significance of knowledge in the context of Castile's political culture are directly connected to the twofold notion of the archive that I use in this paper. Ann Stoler has argued that scholars have started employing the term archive as a “metaphor for any corpus of selective forgettings and collections” (2002: 94). In such a form, it has served them as an analytical instrument for studying early-modern practices of reading and writing, containing, as Michel Foucault noted, “the rules of a practice that enables statements both to survive and to undergo regular modification” (2004: 145-147). Politically active actors constantly borrowed ideas, vocabulary, and imageries from existing sources, whose traditional connotations they used to communicate with their readers. At the same time, they allocated new symbolic meanings to the existing set of signs and codes by means of introductions and glosses related to personal

experiences and aspirations. Hence, authors maintained a constant dialogue with other texts to employ their authority or refute their ideas in a perpetual competition for political and cultural authority.

Yet, the term 'archive' is understood here not only as a metaphor. It also refers to an actual thing or place in which documents were gathered, stored, and produced. According to Jacques Derrida, the archive should be thought of as the beginning of things, a place related at once to commencement and commandment (Derrida 1996: 1). Within every political entity, whether it concerned a state or a small village, the archive helped to preserve, for future generations, the memories of, for instance, the prerogatives and duties of the people that belonged to it. The link with the legal administration was further reinforced by the fact that those persons that had the right to make and represent the laws were often the same ones that had the power to add documents to the archive or remove them from it (Stoler 2002).

Due to this connection with the system of the law, struggles over the control of the archive often intermingled with debates about the organization of the socio-political order. One important issue of controversy during the early-modern period concerned the notion of kingship. Diverging perceptions of royal sovereignty often oscillated between the ideal of a centralized state headed by an absolute monarch, on the one hand, and, on the other, a decentralized one in which lord and vassals shared sovereignty. Proponents of a strong monarchy argued that just as the human body possessed only a single head to steer and control its members, the social organism only required one part to regulate social life and provide for justice. In practice, however, absolute royal authority was always negotiated with members of local elites or royal officials. Though it was commonly accepted that having a king to administer justice was preferable to the chaos of anarchy, some political theorists argued that, since the people had entrusted the monarch with his office, he ought to respect their laws and customs, take their interests into consideration, and listen to their advice at all times (Lavellé 2000). For them, it was also essential to administer their own archive and be able to appoint their own *letrados* to voice their opposition and to delimitate their proper jurisdictional space from that of their political competitors.

The mapping of the municipal or seignorial space, and the archiving of its boundaries, was an important political strategy used by local elites to define their connection with the monarchy and, simultaneously, offer resistance to the Crown's imperial aspirations (Rodríguez Velasco 2009: 104-114). By means of description, people allocated new meanings to space so as to impose on it a specific system of beliefs about the organization of the world. For this purpose, they had at their disposal an extensive toolbox of spatial practices and techniques with which spaces could be represented textually or visually. Using an archive of classical, medieval, and contemporary texts and images as a

point of departure, authors and artists mixed knowledge from areas as diverse as history, natural history, astronomy, cosmography, geography, and chorography to describe and praise places, the people inhabiting them, their qualities, as well as that of their natural world and the heavenly bodies above them.

In the course of the sixteenth century, the Spanish Crown and its bureaucrats developed various new initiatives aimed at the surveying of the royal estate, which yielded an enormous amount of situated knowledge about its overseas territories. We could conceive of this accumulation of knowledge, as scholars often have done, as evidence of the expansion of the imperial state's power. As Brendecke observes correctly, however, the amount of information about the periphery held in the center does not necessarily say anything about the ability of the latter to control the former (2009: 25-27). In fact, such an idea neglects, to some extent, the desire of those in the periphery to inform the center and to determine what the monarch and his officials in Castile could, and could not, see. Therefore, it is important to analyze the production of knowledge about the American space as a dialectical process involving various actors, inspired by diverging interests, who were constantly negotiating the organization of the social order and their proper place within it.

The formation of the viceroy

A person who reflected extensively on these issues was the first viceroy of New Spain, Don Antonio de Mendoza. Born in Granada, only a few years after its conquest, Don Antonio grew up in an environment that was at once determined by the Muslim culture of the former rulers and the Christian-Roman tradition introduced by those that replaced them. His father, Don Ínigo López de Mendoza, Count of Tendilla and the perpetual Captain General of Granada, had turned his court in the Alhambra into a center of humanistic learning and culture, where his children were educated according to the principles of the *studia humanitatis* by the distinguished humanists he patronized (Nader 1979: 150-179). In addition to the theoretical lessons of the liberal arts, Don Antonio was introduced, at an early age, to the practical arts of war and governance (Escudero Buendía 2003). From his father's letters we learn that such a political apprenticeship involved the transfer of knowledge about rhetoric, public finance, administration, taxation, land measuring, military architecture, and the fostering of agriculture and trade (López de Mendoza 2007: e.g., letter, 478).

The experiences obtained during the course of these years directly contributed to the future viceroy's ideas about politics and the organization of society. Due to his involvement in his father's efforts to reorganize the kingdom, he became well acquainted with the challenges and dangers threatening the order and peace in a recently conquered society. The environment in which people from different cultural and religious back-

grounds lived together also taught Mendoza about the significance of local traditions and customs, and how to deal with local sensitivities. He personally experienced that a political strategy based on adaptation, gradual conversion, and education by means of good example was more fruitful and less likely to agitate the natural population as, for instance, Cardinal Cisneros' politics of forced conversion (Szmolka Clares 1982: 86-87). Finally, he learned that what appeared normal to him was at times looked upon with disdain in other parts of the realm. Once, for example, his father warned him to leave his Granadian garments behind and change them for Castilian ones ("a la castellana") before travelling to a relative (López de Mendoza 1973: 799).

The tensions between his father and the court, resulting from the diverging ideas about the political course to be taken in the kingdom of Granada, also affected Don Antonio's ideals about the relationship between the king and his vassals. Tendilla complained bitterly about the attempts of the Crown to interfere in his businesses and the latter's obstinate attitude towards his advice (Nader 1979: 150-179). The future viceroy, like most of his siblings, seemed to have shared his father's opinion about the feudal or particularistic organization of the social order (Escudero Buendía 2003). Still, Don Antonio knew that, as a second-born son, his future would depend largely on his abilities to win the monarch's favor and make his fortune by means of royal rewards. In 1526, therefore, he and his brothers seized upon the opportunity of Charles I's six-month stay in the Alhambra to impress him with their skills and loyalty. In this effort they succeeded splendidly, for all the family members saw their status improved during the following years. Don Antonio first obtained the position of camarero real and later that of viceroy in New Spain.

During the years spent in the service of his father, his older brother, and the monarchs, Don Antonio not only developed his political and administrative skills through practice but by means of reading as well. At the time of his departure to the New World in 1535, he brought with him a substantial library consisting of no less than two hundred books (AGI, Contratación, 5787, N.1, L.4). Although no shipping list is known to exist, the collection most likely contained the same mix of classical works, chronicles, law codes, religious treatises, and military manuals that characterized the chivalric and noble libraries of the time. Indeed, in the testament of his son, Don Francisco de Mendoza, who served as the viceroy's right hand in the New World for almost a decade, we find the same titles that had been propagated for their civilizing wisdom (*magistra vitae*) and practical examples by influential persons like Cartagena and the Marques de Santillana since the fifteenth century (Lawrence 1979; Morera 2007).

Next to these classics, however, Don Francisco also possessed a large number of recent titles, like Georgius Agricola's *De mensuris & ponderibus* (1533), Vitellionis's *Mathematici Doctissimi* (1535), and Pedro de Medina's *Arte de Navegar* (1545). These

works suggest a particular interest for weights and measures, exchange rates, triangulation and the computation of distances, areas and volumes that by then had become important topics of a practical literature written for a public of princes and noblemen hungry for classical knowledge serving as a model for the societies they tried to organize (Rowland 1998: 109-140). Don Francisco shared this interest with his father, who, that we know for sure, also possessed two influential books fitting within this tradition. The first was Petrus Apianus' *Cosmographicus liber* (1524), which he discussed with the cosmographer, Alonso de Santa Cruz, in Seville just before crossing the Atlantic. The latter would later recall how he was impressed by the viceroy's curiosity for cosmographical matters, his profound knowledge of astronomy, and his acquaintance with some of the most recent developments in the disciplines of cosmography and geography (Santa Cruz, 1921: 47). The second work concerned Leon Battista Alberti's architectural manual, entitled *De re aedificatoria* (1485). The Mexican historian Guillermo Tovar de Teresa found a copy of this treatise and has shown how Mendoza read this book right around the time he started reorganizing the viceroyalty's urban spaces in 1537 (Tovar de Teresa 1988).

In sum, when Mendoza left Castile for the New World in 1535, he already possessed a considerable political experience both with a multi-cultural society in distress as well as with the specific dynamics of the court. Moreover, his library guaranteed a strong connection with an archive of practical political knowledge providing models, conventions, and strategies that could be used for the reorganization of the viceroyalty, as well as for the discursive legitimation of his decisions. Both of them were of great importance in the development of his surveying activities and the establishment of the viceregal archive.

Seeing Mexico through the archive

When Don Antonio de Mendoza left Castile in the summer of 1535, he knew the Crown held high expectations for his involvement in its knowledge-gathering project. The royal instructions he received before his departure, dated 25 April 1535, describe in detail what information he had to send to Castile and how this was to be obtained (Hanke 1980: 22-31). The monarchs asked him to visit the city of Mexico, as well as all the other towns and villages in the province, to inform himself, and subsequently the Crown, about the number of people living there, their religion, their customs, the amounts of tribute they paid, and the possibility of placing them under the king's perpetual jurisdiction. They also ordered him to make inquiries about the options of implementing new laws that could stimulate economic development and optimize existing methods of exploitation. Finally, they asked him to report on the merits and possessions of the Spaniards, in order for them to get a better idea of the number of

persons that were still waiting to be rewarded for their services rendered during the Conquest.

The new viceroy started the surveying process of the viceroyalty's capital almost immediately after his arrival on 12 November 1535. Only two weeks later, he met with Mexico's cabildo to study the city's official traza designed by Alonso García Bravo in 1524 (Actas de cabildo, Vol. III, 132). After Mendoza explained to the *regidores* that it was his intention to maintain the structure of this plan, he asked them to perform a survey in the city and to find out who was living where, with whom they were married, and if they were *conquistadores*, settlers, or royal officials. Furthermore, they had to verify if each of the grid's urban plots (*solares*) were occupied or available for granting. This collective effort to map the city was the first step in a larger project of land reforms with which the viceroy tried to improve the order in the viceroyalty, and to strengthen his authority in the administration of justice related to the possession of land and *solares*.

On 9 March 1536, Mexico's *regidores* addressed a problem that arose as they tried to map the city's plots. It became clear to them that the uncertainty about the precise location of the borders between urban lots (and the same was true for those between pieces of arable and pasture land outside of the city) sparked almost constant strife (Galván Rivera 1868: 155). In an effort to create clarity, they determined that the foot and the pace would serve as the city's standard measures. On 4 July, the viceroy reaffirmed this decision, while announcing that a special land measuring rod (*padrón*) was made with a length of a little less than three *varas* ("cada vara tiene tres varas de medir menos una ochaua") (Galván Rivera 1868: 155; Actas de cabildo, Vol. IV, 71). These measures counted not only for Mexico; every person in the viceroyalty who wanted to measure his lands was obliged to come to the capital to obtain an officially sanctioned copy of this ruler.

Further details of Mendoza's systematic approach of land surveying are found in a later transcript of a Real Ordenaza preserved in the National Library in Madrid (BNE, MSS/20417/29). This document demonstrates how he tried to regulate the viceroyalty's weights, currencies, and especially its metric system. Besides various tables with basic measures and their mutual ratios, the ordinance provides several carefully drawn images depicting different sizes of land plots (*suertes*), ranging from the largest pasturelands (*sitios de ganado mayor and menor*) to the *caballería* and smaller parts of it. To these drawings are added the exact values of the length, width, diagonal, and surface area, as well as the differences between larger and smaller land plots. A compass card is also included in combination with instructions to use it during the months March, April, September and October – the time of the year when the shadows produced by a rod placed in a ninety degree angle with the ground would move along a straight line and that, as such, could be used to determine the east/west axis (Apian 1575: f.25r; Moreno

Gallo 2004). Finally, it explains how the surface area of different geometrical shapes could be computed (e.g. using squares to determine the surface of a circle).

With these meticulous instructions for the “agrimensor or land measurer”, Mendoza tried to establish a new territorial order that was based on the geometrical division of the land. These efforts to fix delimitations, mark boundaries between individual and collective lands, and record their precise location on maps, was an essential step in the formation of the viceregal archive. For the Spaniards and Indians competing with and among each other over the territory, the documentation compiled by the land measures served at once as a community charter and a legal tool to defend one's property rights before the authorities (Harley 1992). Although, as far as I know, no copy of Mexico's grid from these times has survived, it is probable that the drawing the viceroy and *regidores* studied during their first meeting was redrawn later according to the most up-to-date information and the rules implemented by Mendoza. This is, in fact, what occurred in various towns and villages in the viceroyalty. Local almanacs of the cities of Texcoco and Tepechpan, known today as the *Codex en Cruz* and the *Tira de Tepechpan*, recorded the arrival of the agrimensor as events that were worth remembering for the local community (Dibble 1981, I: 54-55; Diel 2008: 105-106). Moreover, cadastral-like maps, such as the Oztoticpac Land Maps (1540), the *Codex Vergara* and the *Código de Santa María Asunción* (ca. 1543-1544), reveal how the new techniques were actually employed to record the names of the landowners, the size of their possessions, and the kind and quantity of the products they produced for tribute payments (Williams & Harvey 1997).

In 1536, the Crown, eager to see some of the results of the viceroy's surveying work, twice urged Mendoza to send a “traza o pintura” of the principal cities and harbors (Hanke 1980: 37; CODOUL, Vol. XX: 263). During the following year, a drawing of Mexico did indeed reach Seville, but it is not likely that this was the cadaster-like map that was produced in the course of Mendoza's survey. According to a message of the officials of the Casa de la Contratación, dated 2 September 1537, it concerned here a “pintura de Mexico en un palo largo” which they had sent to the court together with various other images (AGI, Indiferente, 1092, N.224). It is very likely that the map of which this note speaks was the colorful *Mapa de México-Tenochtitlán* or *Mapa de Santa Cruz*. Students of this map have usually assumed that the native tlacuilos of the Franciscan college of Santa Cruz drew the map for Mendoza around 1550 (Linné 1948: 204; Leon-Portilla & Aguilera 1986). The map itself, however, suggests that it was drawn at the beginning of Mendoza's tenure rather than at the end of it.

The most important indication for this earlier dating can be found in the descriptions added to the buildings in the urban center. Whereas most of these names refer to churches and convents, five of them designate houses belonging to secular authorities.

Besides the viceregal palace and the house of Hernán Cortés, three references in Indian neighborhoods state: the “house of don Juan”, the “house of Tapia” and the “house of don Pablo.” These names point out the residences of Don Juan Velázquez Tlacotzin, Andrés de Tapia Motelchiuh – “not a nobleman” (Chimalpahin Cuauhtlehuanitzin 1997: 41) – and Don Pablo Xochiquentzin, who had been the first native (interim) rulers of Tenochtitlan from 1521 to 1536. Since no other names appear, this seems to confirm the idea that the drawing was already finished before the appointment of a new governor in 1537.

The information depicted on the map also suggests the existence of a relationship with the surveying activities in which the viceroy and the cabildo were involved. While each of the *regidores* was making his rounds through a part of the city assigned to him, Mendoza and his retinue were making regular journeys through the valley of Mexico to become acquainted with the situation there and to resolve some of the most pressing problems (Aiton 1927: 50; AGI, Justicia, 262, 48-1-5/27, no. 290). The map presents much of the information the Crown requested in its different instructions for Mendoza, including the road and canal systems, the smaller towns in its surroundings, the buildings and other places of authority, the local flora and fauna, and the economic activities of the Indians. But this information was not merely meant for the further exploitation or control of this specific area. Rather, as the accompanying text suggests, it allowed for “the contemplation of the city of Tenuxtitan” (*Urban hanc Tenuxtitan conspiciendam*), which ought to inspire the king to grant it the “grace” it deserved (Linné 1948: 173).

It is not without significance that of the two types of maps that Mendoza could have sent to the court, he chose a chorographical *pintura*. Whereas the grid map is based on geometrical precision and a concise knowledge of local socio-political relations, chorographical maps allowed the artist to describe a certain locality with a degree of artistic liberty. Chorographical descriptions provided insights into the particular nature and qualities of the people, as well as that of the natural world surrounding them, and were commonly used for praise and laudation (Kagan 2000; Pettinaroli 2008). Indeed, the city appears on the map as the great center of a densely populated area bustling with activity – with people hunting, fishing, tending their herds, transporting goods, and gathering natural commodities.

The map was drawn in a style resembling that of the drawings of the Roman *agrimensores* – as we find them in the *Corpus agrimensorum romanorum* (Campbell 2000). Its use of iconic script and pre-Hispanic symbols shows, however, that native artists and informants made a substantial contribution as well. The combination of styles and perspectives suggest that the map was the result of the collaboration between people with different cultural backgrounds that together tried to convey a message to the king and his advisers regarding the quality of their city. With respect to the Indians, for instance,

it is not unimportant that precisely in 1537 Mendoza and the bishop of Mexico, Fray Juan de Zumárraga, actively started promoting the education of the Indian elite in the Colegio de Santa Cruz in Tlalotelco (Linné 1948: 73; Suess 1992: 142-143). In order to focus the viewers' attention onto this church and college, these buildings were drawn in a deviating scale, thus turning them into the map's optical center. The map also brings to the fore the social distinctions among the Indians. The ones that go around dressed in white garments are working independently or can be seen visiting a convent, while others walk around naked and are forced to work by Spaniards or other natives.

In addition to this vision toward the organization of the Indian population, the map also presents a great and wealthy city reflecting the status of its Spanish inhabitants. The conquerors and settlers inhabiting "Tenuxtitan", both by law and sentiment, were gradually losing the status of "natural" from their original place of birth (Alfonso X 1974: Segunda Partida, T. XX; Cuarta Partida, T. XXIV, Law II – this law speaks of a period of ten years of living outside one's own patria). Instead, they began to think of the city as their new *patria*, which, as was their obligation, they tried to aggrandize in order to gain for the community the honors and dignities it deserved. For Mendoza, it was particularly important to glorify Mexico-Tenochtitlan as a new center of authority within the imperial order. Just like his father did when he moved to Granada four decades earlier, he seemed to have assumed the "nueva naturaleza" of the "kingdom" of New Spain, as he intended to create a new lineage of New Spanish viceroys (López de Mendoza 2007: letter 224). Rather than sharing with the Crown the knowledge he must by then have possessed about the distribution of the urban plots and *encomiendas*, or the tributes that were paid by its possessors, he created out of the archive an image of which no one at the time would have missed the ideological nature. Ethelia Ruiz Medrano's study of Mendoza's government can help us to understand why he did so (2006: 75-135). She has demonstrated that the viceroy based much of his authority on his right to allocate grants, oversee land transfers, and solve border conflicts. His control of the spatial archive presented him with the ability to administer this retributive and distributive justice, which he preferred to keep for himself rather than sharing with his competitors.

Such struggles over authority did not only concern those between the viceroy and the officials at the court, but also between him and other persons trying to influence the decision-making processes taking place there. A third kind of image of the city of Mexico, or "Temistitán", that Mendoza helped to diffuse at the end of the 1530s can help to illustrate the importance that he ascribed to being accepted as an authoritative source of information. This written history of the city's origins resembled the native cartographic histories, as it was based on "sus libros de sacrificios escritos por figuras" (Oviedo 1959, Vol. IV, Cap. L, 244-248). According to the royal chronicler, Gonzalo

Fernández de Oviedo, Mendoza sent copies of this story to the court as well as to his brother, Don Diego, in Venice. Through their shared Venetian friend, the humanist Giovanni Battista Ramusio, Oviedo obtained the version that eventually ended up in his *Historia general y natural de las Indias*.

Mendoza's story commences with the peregrination of Captain Orchilobos and four hundred soldiers, armed with weapons of gold and silver. They journeyed from the north-western region of Pánuco to the Valley of Mexico, where they joined the people from "Méjico" in their strife against those from "Tascala". After they had won the battle, they founded a settlement on an islet in the middle of a lake. Here Orchilobos constructed a small tower of stones that would later become the 'templo mayor' devoted to him – temples were often described in early Spanish sources as "Uchilobos" (compare: Actas de Cabildo, Vol. I, Bk. 1, 120-121). During the subsequent years, the village developed into a city and Orchilobos, a great conqueror, became the 'lord of Mexico'. He promulgated laws concerning the election of kings, and the celebration of ceremonies and offerings, as well as rules about how to fight in combat and in duels. He then told his people that God had sent him and that the time had come to return to Him. After he left, the people renamed their city Temistitán, meaning 'fruit of the sun', after the tree that grew on the place where Orchilobos once lived. The story then jumps forward four hundred years to the times of "Guatezuma", his son, king Montezuma, and Cortés, whom the Indians believed was no other than Orchilobos.

The history of Temistitán presented in Mendoza's letter conveys a syncopated narrative of the city's genesis and the mythical origins of its name from what was again a mixed perspective. In it can be recognized Don Hernán Cortés's invention of both the city's hispanized name and the word Ochilobos (also Uichilobos or Huichilobos) that was used to refer to the Aztec god of war, Huitzilopochtli (Elliot 1967: 53-54). Mendoza's story, however, almost completely reverses the traditional image of Orchilobos and the associations it evoked. Whereas Cortés and his captains, especially Bernal Díaz de Castillo, tied the deity and the temples named after him to the idolatry and cruel sacrifices of the natives, in Mendoza's history a more humanized Orchilobos appears as the king who established order and justice. The story reveals the abilities of the inhabitants of Temistitán to live according to the precepts of the law (*policía*), thus demonstrating their qualities of reasoning rather than the bestial qualities stressed by the earlier conquerors. A second aspect in which Mendoza's story diverges from that of earlier ones is that regarding the migrants' place of departure. Instead of coming from the south, from Peru or Nicaragua, it states that these people came from the north. Not by accident, this was also the direction in which Mendoza had just sent a large expedition under the direction of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado in the hope to find 'another Mexico'.

In his commentary to the story, Oviedo strongly criticizes Mendoza's version, which he thought diverged too much from that which Cortés had heard from Montezuma himself. Since the latter probably knew more from his own origins and family than anyone else, the chronicler deemed this a more reliable source than those used by the viceroy. In 1541, he wrote to Mendoza to share his doubts and to ask him for complementary information. The viceroy responded to these questions in the only letter he ever seemed to have sent to Oviedo. He felt clearly provoked to defend himself against the misconceptions that could possibly cause damage to his reputation as a provider of information about the New World. He corrects Oviedo on several themes and stresses that he had invested much time in order to understand the land and the great diversity of opinions of its people ("yo he procurado de sabello muy particularmente"). Still, much more work had to be done since "aunque Montezuma e Méjico es lo que entre nosotros ha sonado, no era menor señor el Cazoní de Mechuacán, y otros que no reconocían al uno ni al otro" (Oviedo 1959, Vol. IV, Cap. L, 252-253). Thus he questioned the situation in which Cortés's words were considered to be more valuable than his own, even though the conqueror had hardly known anything about the great variety of peoples and cultures inhabiting the New World.

Finding a remedy for the republic's ailments

Mendoza's struggle for political and cultural authority intensified during the second half of his tenure as a result of the sudden devaluation of his role in the making of overseas policy. Alarmed by the problems sketched by other sources, like Cortés and Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, the Crown drastically changed its political course in the New World without consulting the viceroy first. While the New Laws (1542), that were the result of this change, were, in the first place, meant to address the abuses of the *encomenderos*, they had a direct impact on the appreciation of the viceregal archive as well. It was, for instance, determined that the activities of the Council of the Indies were to be curtailed to the control of the royal officials instead of "entender en negocios particulares" (García Icazbalceta 1858-1866, I). This provision could, on the one hand, be understood as a reaffirmation of the authority of the viceregal officials and their familiarity with the local situation. On the other hand, however, their authority and the significance of the archive decreased as visiting royal officials, guided by the remorse and disappointment of the less fortunate, were allowed to destroy their reputation and work. That is, at least, how Mendoza perceived of Emperor Charles V's decision to have a royal visitador, Francisco Tello de Sandoval, evaluate his functioning. It seems, he noted in a letter to his oldest brother, "que se a tenido mas fin a hazerme agrauio y afruenta que no ha saber verdad pues por otros camynos y medios se pudiera saber

sin pregonarme publicamente por las plaças ques cosa que no se puede dexar sentir y agrauirme” (A.G.I., Mexico, 92).

According to Fray Juan de Zumárraga, one of Mendoza’s closest allies, the sudden loss of authority the viceroy experienced affected the well-being of New Spain as a whole. On 4 October 1543, he wrote to the king explaining that a natural bond existed between Spaniards and Indians – the first being the body’s bones and the latter its flesh. The changes that the Crown intended to make with respect to the encomienda system would weaken this connection, while they would take away the incentive of distinction and reward, and leave its members spiritless:

Si assi como el anima dá vida á los huesos y á la carne juntos la fee formada y inflamada de caridad estuviere en los unos y en los otros y los hiciere una mesma cosa. Porque parece horrible que los huesos despedacen su propia carne y que la carne se aparte de los huesos, y para que lo ya dicho haya efecto es menester dar asiento en la tierra que los Españoles tengan reposo y arraigamiento perpetuo en ella para que esta tierra les sea madre y ellos hijos que la amen honren y defiendan (BNE, MSS/20285/3, 14-15).

In order to remedy the ailments that were deteriorating the Republic’s health, he pushed Mendoza forward as the principal and foremost source of information, whose opinions should outweigh all other sentiments uttered in front of the king. Zumárraga’s letter is just one example of the massive support and vast amount of legal data that Mendoza managed to mobilize to ward off Sandoval’s allegations, and that he used to convince the Crown to mitigate the New Laws (A.G.I., Justicia, 258; A.G.I., Justicia, 262; Aiton 1927: 137-171). Indeed, the order he received in 1546 to explore the possibilities of carrying out the *repartimiento general*, a redistribution of the land among the conquistadores and early settlers, shows that the Crown – and Prince Philip in particular – had learned its lessons about the dramatic events of the preceding years (Puga 1878-1879: I, 479-480).

According to Jerónimo López, a first-hour and impoverished conqueror, the news about the king’s intentions to reverse the odious New Laws, and reward the conquerors, caused an outburst of happiness on the streets of Mexico (Paso y Troncoso 1939-1942, Vol. V, 7). He wrote to the king informing him that the viceroy had started the difficult task of gathering the necessary information about the Indian towns and the conquerors’ merits. Impressed by Mendoza’s cartographical archive (“por sus rumbos e cuentas de Tolomeo lo tiene todo trazado”), he remarks that there was no one better prepared to finish such a daunting task:

[...] no hablo en perjuicio de nadie porque no inoro que en los reinos e señoríos de vuestra majestad hay muy grandes y sabios señores, pero los de allá entenderán mejor los negocios de allá porque los tratan y así los harán y los negocios de acá no los harán porque no los entenderán ni a ellos ni a la tierra, ni a la gente porquel de acá es otro lenguaje y ha menester entendello y sabello: esto todo tiénelo muy bien entendido y sabido el visorrey [...] (13).

López's optimism was short-lived, however. At the outset of the next year, he realized that the viceroy had no intention whatsoever to redistribute any of the land (Paso y Troncoso 1939, Vol. V, 77). Indeed, he feared that when a person with so much knowledge and experience would appear before the king, the end of the repartimiento would be a foregone conclusion.

López was right about Mendoza's plans. Not only was the viceroy strongly opposed to making such sweeping changes, like Zumárraga he also believed in a strongly hierarchically organized society in which every member occupied a place proper to his or her qualities. To allocate lands to people that had not received it from him during the preceding decade would undermine his authority and disturb the social order he had so painstakingly tried to establish. It would, moreover, result in an unhealthy leveling of society that would cause further exploitation by people trying to squeeze as much profit from their small possessions as possible. Mendoza's intentions to return to Castile and leave his son, Don Francisco, behind to replace him were, however, not well received at the court. Following the advice of the then president of the Audiencia of Lima, Don Pedro de la Gasca, Charles V had decided that Mendoza was the most suitable candidate to bring peace and order to the viceroyalty of Peru (AHN, Diversos-Colecciones, 23, N.14). Under normal circumstances, it would have been difficult to refuse a loyal servant, and member of such an important family, permission to return home, but the viceroy's unauthorized attempt to leave his office to his son was utilized by the king to force Mendoza to do as was told. The viceroy oldest brother, the President of the Council of the Indies, left no doubt about the gravity of the situation when he wrote him that "que cuando él no pudiese ir sus huesos fuesen, porque se había tratado que era señor de la tierra" (Suarez de Peralta 1949: 95).

These notices put Mendoza in an extremely precarious situation. Within the viceroyalty, support for him and his son remained invariably high. Still, he realized that the news of his fallen prestige at the court and the appointment of his replacement marked the end of his political project. Though he could eventually have stayed in New Spain, as his successor Don Luis de Velasco had actually preferred, Mendoza chose to do the honorable thing and undertook the arduous journey to Peru (Aiton 1927: 187-190; Escudero Buendía 2006). At the same time, he started preparing Don Francisco, whose future had also become unsure now he would not be viceroy, for a visit to the court to debate the damage done by royal policies and to present their solution for the pressing problems threatening the peace and order of the colonial societies. First, Don Francisco would accompany his father to Peru in order to become acquainted with the situation there, and then he would return to Castile.

When he crossed the Atlantic in the summer of 1552, Don Francisco de Mendoza carried with him a remarkable collection of documents. This included, first of all, the

Libro de visitas de los pueblos de la Nueva España (1548) (BNE, MSS/2800), which contains the results of the survey performed in some 900 towns and villages that was executed to study the desirability of a *repartimiento general*. Another part existed of descriptions and drawings of his own journey to Peru, where he visited Cuzco, La Paz, La Plata, Potosí, and Arequipa. Among those were also the first images of “el cerro de Potocsi [sic], de las minas de plata y otros cerros, volcanes, valles y honduras que en aquella tierra hay” (Garcilaso de la Vega 1970: 573-574). Finally, he carried a copy of Juan de Betanzos’ history of the “Incas Capuccana”, entitled the *Suma y narración de los Incas* (1551), as well as the famous book of Aztec medicine, the *Codex de la Cruz Badiano* (1552).

The collection that the two Mendozas brought together presented one of the most extensive and diverse images of the New World, its people, and its nature to that date. Including surveys of New Spain and Peru, the continent’s cultural diversity, its (natural) wealth, and the many difficulties with which its inhabitants had to cope became visible in an exceptional way. Once again, however, the selection from the viceregal archives and the form in which it was presented cannot be isolated from the political opinions of the Mendozas. The viceroy confirmed this when he wrote to the king about this collection and advised him that it would “conviene el servicio de vuestra majestad que antes le mande ver y abrir ni entregar a persona ninguna vuestra majestad le oiga [a Francisco]” (Paso y Troncoso 1939, Vol. VI, No. 349, 161). This shows, once more, his preoccupation with the abilities of those in Castile to understand the complexity and practices of a new world “sin ninguna orden ni razón ni cosa que parezca a lo de allá” (Hanke 1980: 57). Even though the Crown and the Council of the Indies did have their sources, their lack of experience made it impossible for them to administer justice according to the needs of the Spaniards and the Indians. In fact, the drastic changes they tried to make had done more damage than good because, to use the words of one of the viceroy’s confidants, Luis de León Romano, “lo que parece ser útil y provecho para estos miserables cuando llega acá por la dilación del tiempo es dañoso porque no se compadece que el médico esté tan ausente del enfermo como está este reigno dél” (Paso y Troncoso 1939, Vol. VI, No. 348, 160-161).

The *Codex de la Cruz Badiano* stands as a particularly strong symbol for the message that the Mendozas tried to convey. It illustrated the “quality” and “fertility” of the land of which the viceroy talks in the letter with which we started this article. It also confirmed the quality of its natural inhabitants, who were able to learn and possessed valuable knowledge of which the Spaniards could profit. Finally, as a medicinal herbal reference it also symbolized the purpose with which Don Francisco had come to the court, namely to present a remedy to cure the illnesses of the body politic. In this light, the concern of Don Martin de la Cruz with being “taught by no formal reasonings but

educated by experiments only” should not simply be perceived of as his own recognition of his inferiority (Gates 1939: 1). Instead, the native doctor's words also came to symbolize the idea that remedies for the ailments threatening the American societies, just like those threatening the health of individual bodies, could only be resolved with remedies based on the actual practice and experience in this world.

Conclusion

The study of Don Antonio de Mendoza's involvement in the mapping of the New World and the construction of the archive shows that this was by no means a homogeneous project inspired by a common imperial mindset. On the contrary, diverging personal interests and expectations about the right form of government had a profound impact on the relationship between the Crown and its foremost representative, and on the formation of the colonial archive. In this essay, we have seen how New Spain's first viceroy contributed considerably to the formation of this archive by systematically collecting information about the land, its inhabitants, and the division of both of them. To a certain extent, these efforts to organize and regulate the organization of the archive were complementary to those made by the royal officials in Castile, even when the customs began to evolve under the influence of local practices. On the other hand, Mendoza actively opposed the idea that direct experience and understanding of the viceregal archive could be replaced by mere indirect access to a centrally organized colonial archive as it was taking shape in Seville. As a patron and producer of knowledge, Mendoza's remarkable ability to move between different cultural archives contributed to the cooperation between people from different backgrounds, working together to produce textual and visual images of the gradually shaping colonial societies. Such knowledge was not merely produced for colonizing purposes, however. It also had an important discursive dimension as it represented the efforts of the inhabitants of the viceroyalties to define their own place within the larger imperial order. It was precisely his connection with the land and its people that would also put Mendoza in trouble. For in the eyes of the Crown it was unacceptable that a strong local elite with a direct access to local knowledge would control its far-flung possessions. This tension between the Crown's interests and those of the viceroyalties' inhabitants would play an ongoing role during the centuries to come.

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