

**Ida Altman**

**Moving Around and Moving On:  
Spanish Emigration in the Age of Expansion**



**1992 LECTURE SERIES**

*Working Papers*

*No. 15*

Department of Spanish and Portuguese

University of Maryland

College Park

1994

**Ida Altman**, who received her doctorate from Johns Hopkins University in 1982, is Professor of History at the University of New Orleans. She is the author of *Emigrants and Society: Extremadura and Spanish America in the Sixteenth Century* (1989; Herbert E. Bolton Prize of the Conference on Latin American History, and Spain and America in the Quincentennial of the Discovery Prize from the Spanish Ministry of Culture). She is the co-editor, with James Horn, of *"To Make America": European Emigration in the Early Modern Period* (1991), and, with James Lockhart, of *Provinces of Early Mexico* (1976). Professor Altman has also published many articles on emigration, Colonial Mexico, and the early period of contact in the Americas. She served as guest curator for the Library of Congress Quincentenary exhibition, *1492: An Ongoing Voyage*.

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ISSN 1046-1671

Department of Spanish and Portuguese  
University of Maryland at College Park  
2215 Jiménez Hall  
College Park, MD 20742

## Moving Around and Moving On:

### Spanish Emigration in the Age of Expansion

Emigration from the realms of the crown of Castile in the sixteenth century constituted the first major, sustained movement of people to the Americas from Europe. Beginning with the second voyage of Columbus (1493), this movement, initially directed to the islands of the Caribbean and numerically fairly small, gained momentum in the 1520s and 30s with the conquests of Mexico and Peru; they would become the main centers of the Spanish empire in the Americas. The growing numbers of migrants meant greater complexity as individuals from an increasingly large geographical area headed for a number of possible destinations. By the middle decades of the sixteenth century patterns such as chain migration, growing participation of women, departure of nuclear family units, forms of labor migration, and return migration (often a stimulus for further emigration from the returnee's place of origin) emerged clearly.

I propose to discuss here the context in which the transatlantic movement of Spaniards took place. All too commonly emigration has been treated as if it were marginal not only to early modern Spanish society but even to the new societies of Spanish America. Until recently the topic failed to attract much attention from scholars working in the field of either Spanish or Spanish American history, although in the past decade and a half scholarly study of Spanish migration to the Americas has increased notably.<sup>1</sup> On the whole, however, not only has Spanish

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<sup>1</sup> The main published sources for Spanish emigration are the *Catálogo de pasajeros a Indias durante los siglos XVI, XVII y XVIII*, vols. 1-7 (Seville, 1940-46, 1980-86) and Peter Boyd-Bowman, *Índice geobiográfico de cuarenta mil pobladores españoles de América en el siglo XVI*, vols. 1-2 (Bogota, 1964 and Mexico, 1968). The Fondo de Cultura Económica has republished the first volume as the *Índice geobiográfico de más de 56 mil pobladores de la América Hispánica* (1985) and is due to publish volumes 3-5. Another important source for information on emigrants is Enrique Otte, *Cartas privadas de emigrantes a Indias* (Seville, 1988). Articles written by Peter Boyd-Bowman, James Lockhart, Woodrow Borah, Theopolis Fair, and Magnus Mörner—the last including a useful bibliography—that appeared in Fredi Chiapelli, ed., *First Images of America*

emigration failed to find a place within the mainstream of the historiography of Spanish settlement of the Americas, it also has remained largely on the margins of the more general history of European expansion.

The context of Spanish emigration was a complex one that encompassed varied societies and cultures as well as periods of time that, while not necessarily coinciding, might have entailed congruent stages of development. Spanish migration to the Americas preceded English migration by a full century, yet the similarities between the movements appear to outweigh the differences that might have resulted primarily from the discrepancy in timing. In fact comparison of migration from Spain with other early modern European movements points to so many parallels that it would appear that factors such as timing, the relative attractiveness of possible destinations, and the availability of labor for establishing commercial enterprises all played a much greater part in determining the size, direction, and composition of emigrant groups than did national identity or policy as such.<sup>2</sup> Rather than being homogeneous, cohesive phenomena, migration movements from any one country really were aggregates of differentiated migrant groups —servants, entrepreneurs, artisan or farming families. Such groups, whether defined by their socioeconomic and occupational status or by motivation, in some cases overlapped with one another and in others were fairly sharply delineated (although they were always, of course, at least indirectly connected). Certainly what we now know about Spanish migration indicates that it was no different in this regard.

Rather than offer a broad discussion of statistics and national histories I instead will consider certain groups or individuals, chosen mainly because there is sufficient detail regarding at least some of their activities that by scrutinizing them one gains a basic understanding of

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(Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1976) serve as a good summary of research on emigration to that point. Magnus Mörner's "Migraciones a Hispanoamérica durante la época colonial," *Suplemento de Anuario de Estudios Americanos* (Seville, 1991), vol. 48, no. 2, 3-25, is an excellent guide to current scholarship and trends in the field.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the studies in Ida Altman and James Horn, eds., "To Make America": *European Emigration in the Early Modern Era* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991) and the discussion in the "Introduction" by Altman and Horn (1-30). The bibliography on early modern emigration by now is substantial, although the scholarly work on British migration still dwarfs the remainder of the early modern field.

some of the mechanisms that governed transatlantic migration overall. These same mechanisms not only helped to convey people from one place to another but at the same time worked to reinforce cultural continuity as well as transference and change.

I will begin with the story of a marriage in which one partner emigrated and the other would not. Benito de Astorga, a man from the town of Astorga in León in north central Castile, first went to Hispaniola in 1502 as part of the large group that accompanied the new royal governor of the island, Frey Nicolás de Ovando. Apparently he continued to travel back and forth between the islands and Spain as a merchant, so it is not entirely surprising that in 1512 he married a woman named Isabel de Mayorga, who lived in his home town in León. Probably he intended to return there permanently to live once he had accumulated sufficient capital. These plans went awry in 1521, however, when he returned to Hispaniola from a visit to Castile intending to sell off all his property there and leave the island for good. Initially he sold a herd of cattle but was unable to divest himself of the rest. Astorga wrote to his wife telling her he had decided to stay and asking her to join him; he also began to invest in a sugar estate and purchased and rented African slaves.<sup>3</sup>

What might have seemed to Benito de Astorga a reasonable enough request—that his wife come to live with him in Santo Domingo—encountered strong and continued resistance on the part of his wife and her family. Notwithstanding visits from a series of Astorga's acquaintances and numerous letters not only from him but from male and female friends of his in Santo Domingo, his wife proved unwilling to commit herself to leaving her home and family for married life in the Indies. Certainly the means to have done so existed in abundance. On three different occasions she was to have traveled with another woman who was accompanying or going to join her own husband. Benito de Astorga made arrangements for her to stay in the house of a man named Luis Fernández de Alfaro when she arrived in Seville. Astorga sent money for all her travel expenses to this resident of Seville, who himself might have been in Hispaniola at some time and whose son

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<sup>3</sup> Benito de Astorga's deposition for the Audiencia regarding his efforts to get his wife to join him and the testimony of his friends in the case appear in Archivo General de Indias (AGI) Santo Domingo 9, ramo 2, no. 18; see also AGI Santo Domingo 9, ramo 2, nos. 19A and 19B.

Juan de Alfaro was living there in the 1520s. At Christmas time in 1526 she, along with two of her brothers, was to have met Astorga's friend Melchor de Castro (who had visited Isabel de Mayorga in Astorga) in Seville, but she failed to do so. Subsequently Isabel wrote to her husband saying that if Benito's cousin Hernando de Ponferrada, who was married and living in La Palma (in the Canaries), would come for her she would make the journey to Hispaniola with him and one of her brothers. Ponferrada left Palma for Seville and from there went to Astorga in León for Isabel. Once again, however, she and her "mother and relatives" decided she should not leave. As of 1533, the latest that records were found for this case, she still had not joined her husband.

One observes a notably high degree of physical mobility on the part of many of the participants in this domestic drama, both within Spain and back and forth across the Atlantic. Astorga himself made numerous trips between Spain and Hispaniola, his friend Melchor de Castro returned to Spain at least twice (traveling not just to Seville, of course, but all the way north to Astorga), and several of Astorga's other acquaintances on the island visited there at least once during the 1520s. Astorga's cousin Hernando de Ponferrada traveled from La Palma to Seville and north to Astorga and then home again, but he had been ready and willing to accompany Isabel de Mayorga all the way to Hispaniola.

The frequency and seeming ease with which individuals moved from place to place—within Castile, to Seville, the Canaries, or the Caribbean—suggests how quickly in the early sixteenth century the expanding Spanish empire came to be viewed as one arena in which people could move around to pursue opportunities. Just as remarkable was the rapidity with which networks of contact and communication developed to facilitate this movement. The affected parties in this case maintained intense, continuous communication through letters and by word of mouth. The thrust of this constant communication was to underscore and ensure the primacy of the bonds of kinship and friendship, in which individuals looked first to friends and relatives to see to their affairs in their absence and help safeguard their interests, often reaching decisions on the basis of collective, not individual, welfare and advantage.

None of these observations are of much help, unfortunately, when it comes to deciphering Isabel de Mayorga's motivations. Her voice is heard only very indirectly through the comments and reactions of



others, who are mostly men (Melchor de Castro, for example, complained on his return to Santo Domingo that she and her brothers had made a fool of him). Assuming that she had no strong objections to the general notion of conducting married life with her husband, one might conclude that her (and her family's) decision that Isabel should not join him in Hispaniola hinged on a negative answer to the most basic question posed by the possibility of emigrating: Will I (or my family) be better off? Apparently she—or they—thought not.

The story of this marriage suggests two topics which, while seemingly unrelated, actually were closely connected. These are the role played by Seville in channeling emigrants to the Indies, and the migration patterns of women. The connections between the two are largely circumstantial; but then it is those circumstances that to a great extent shaped and defined the nature of mobility in Castilian society and hence formed an essential part of the context in which emigration took place.

Seville dominated the "Indies enterprise," acting as virtually the sole port of embarkation in the sixteenth century and sending large numbers of emigrants all through the period; in the early years, up to 1519, one in six emigrants came just from the city itself. While its share (and the share Andalucía) diminished somewhat over time (although still remaining high), Sevillian women continued to figure especially prominently in the movement. In the years between 1560 and 1579 Seville sent one-third of all women migrants to the Indies.<sup>4</sup> But Seville not only funneled people to the Indies. As a flourishing center for trade, industry, and commercial agriculture the port city was a major source of attraction for Spaniards, doubling in size to over 100,000 inhabitants by the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup> A number of individuals (all men!) living in the Extremaduran town of Cáceres, some 250 kilometers distant from Seville, testified in the 1560s that they had traveled there

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Boyd-Bowman, *Patterns of Spanish Emigration to the New World (1493-1580)* (Buffalo, 1973), 5, 17, 44, 72, 75.

<sup>5</sup> The size of the transatlantic movement from Seville suggests that in some ways it might have functioned much as did London in the seventeenth century. London grew from a city of 60,000 in the early sixteenth century to 575,000 in 1700, as internal migration brought an estimated one million migrants to the city between 1550 and 1750. There also was a substantial movement out of London across the Atlantic. See Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America* (New York, 1986), 24-25, also 40, 12.

several times.<sup>6</sup> Young men from villages of the distant northern Cantabrian region would spend a few years working in Seville before returning home with sufficient savings to establish themselves.<sup>7</sup>

By necessity most Spanish emigrants passed through Seville, regardless of whether they had any previous connections with the city or not. In the case of emigrants from Extremadura (and elsewhere) contacts with people in Seville, especially people from their own home towns who were living there temporarily or permanently, formed a vital link in the chain connecting them to the Indies and facilitated their move there. The process of obtaining a license and preparing for the journey usually involved a stay of weeks, or more likely months, in Seville.<sup>8</sup> Seville's monopoly over emigration meant that some experience of life in the cosmopolitan port city was shared by virtually all emigrants, not just those who were from there. The existence of this common denominator might have mitigated the differences between Sevillian emigrants and others and doubtless played a part in the decision of some returnees (admittedly a minority, but a fairly conspicuous one) who established themselves in Seville rather than in their home towns after leaving the Indies.

Consideration of the role and significance of Seville in emigration thus brings us to the topic of internal migration and its relationship to the transatlantic movement. Clearly a high degree of physical mobility existed in early modern Spanish society. The evidence for this moving around is considerable, and the lack of any special comment it seems to have elicited (recall all the moving about in Castile of Benito de Astorga's various agents) seems to attest to its utter normality. Much of the movement was, of course, essentially local or cyclical —i.e., from smaller places to larger ones, or conversely from central to more outlying parts of municipal jurisdictions where more land was

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<sup>6</sup> Ida Altman, *Emigrants and Society. Extremadura and Spanish America in the Sixteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1989), 207.

<sup>7</sup> David E. Vassberg, "Mobility and Migration in Sixteenth-Century Spanish Villages," paper presented at the 1992 meeting of the American Historical Association. Cited with permission of the author (work in progress).

<sup>8</sup> Auke Pieter Jacobs, "Legal and Illegal Emigration from Seville, 1550-1650," in Altman and Horn, eds., "*To Make America.*"

available,<sup>9</sup> connected with marketing activities, or seasonally in conjunction with such employment as transport and peddling or herding or other agricultural work.<sup>10</sup> There also was movement over longer distances, directed perhaps in particular toward the fastest-growing urban centers — Toledo in the first two-thirds of the sixteenth century and, of course, Seville<sup>11</sup> — but affecting many cities in this period.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps one of the least known forms of internal migration resulted from the apparently widespread practice of childhood and adolescent service. Both boys and girls commonly left their Castilian villages to work for families elsewhere, usually (although not invariably) in neighboring villages. While the total period of service could last for years, there often was much turnover, and young people commonly served in more than one household before reaching adulthood. Although most boys and girls went to nearby places within the province, some moved much greater distances.<sup>13</sup>

We still lack detailed knowledge of the demographic, socioeconomic, or even regional composition of internal migratory movements that would permit meaningful comparison with the

<sup>9</sup> See Helen Nader, *Liberty in Absolutist Spain. The Habsburg Sale of Towns, 1516-1700* (Baltimore, 1990) on the establishment of new settlements and municipalities.

<sup>10</sup> See Vassberg, "Mobility and Migration," 2-3.

<sup>11</sup> See Linda Martz, *Poverty and Welfare in Habsburg Spain: The Example of Toledo* (Cambridge, 1983) on the growth of Toledo.

<sup>12</sup> See Annie Molinie-Bertrand, *Au siècle d'or: L'Espagne et ses hommes. La population du royaume de Castille au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1985) on the population growth of towns and cities. David Sven Reher, *Town and Country in Pre-Industrial Spain. Cuenca, 1550-1870* (Cambridge, 1990) examines rural to urban mobility in some detail, although most of his data are for the nineteenth century.

<sup>13</sup> Vassberg, "Mobility and Migration," 4-7. He cites (f.n. 37) a study by María del Carmen García Herrero, "Mozas sirvientas en Zaragoza durante el siglo XV," in *El trabajo de las mujeres en la Edad Media hispana*, ed. Angela Muñoz Fernández and Cristina Segura Graiño (Madrid, 1988) in which the author found cases of girls in domestic service in Zaragoza from Navarre, Castile and even Mallorca (276-277). See also Reher, *Town and Country*, chapter 7 ("Mobility and Migration in Pre-Industrial Cuenca"). His data for the nineteenth century indicate rapid turnover and a high incidence of return of young people to their villages following periods of domestic service in the city (see 155-156).

transatlantic movement;<sup>14</sup> nonetheless one discerns some connections between these migration movements. Here we return to the question of distinctive migration patterns for men and women. While fairly localized moves probably were as likely to involve girls or young women, couples, and families as single men, longer distance migration seems to have been more preponderantly male. Childhood service, which may have included equal numbers of boys and girls, under normal circumstances doubtless conveyed young people to known destinations. Relatives and acquaintances helped to arrange children's entrance into household service, and better-off families often took in poorer relatives on this basis.<sup>15</sup> Men, especially single young men, seem to have been more likely to undertake the dangers and uncertainties both of travel and of relocation in little known or unknown destinations than were women; likewise cyclical and seasonal employment that required mobility—hauling, peddling, herding, migratory farm labor—probably mainly involved men.

It appears likely, then, that within Spain women and girls principally moved to prearranged destinations where they would marry or be received in a specific household (of an employer, relative), or else they moved with their husbands, fathers, or other male relatives. How does this pattern correlate with the transatlantic movement? Very few women of any social rank traveled alone to the Indies; they moved to America under circumstances similar to those under which they relocated within Spain itself. Among the emigrants from Trujillo for whom it was possible to determine modes of travel, only 7 women appear to have undertaken the journey alone (none of them before 1530); in contrast 14 traveled as *criadas* (servants), nearly 60 with husbands or children, 82 with parents, siblings, or other relatives, and 13 went to join relatives.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Vassberg comments on the abundance of anecdotal evidence of mobility as compared to the paucity of data on age, sex, place of origin, return migration, geographical distribution, sex- and job-specific mobility, and the like that would allow more complete analysis of internal migration ("Mobility and Migration," 14).

<sup>15</sup> Vassberg, "Mobility and Migration," 5; Reher, *Town and Country*, 270, 296. Reher writes that "much of the migration and mobility in Cuenca was a function of family interests and needs, or received the support of kin networks" (303).

<sup>16</sup> See Altman, *Emigrants and Society*, Table 9 (p. 177).

Notwithstanding the growing participation of women migrants to the Indies —women's share in the movement increased from 5.6 percent in the period up to 1519 to 28.5 percent in the decades between 1560-79<sup>17</sup>— the prospects of extensive overland travel within Spain itself, with its attendant risks and uncertainties, might have continued to discourage potential women emigrants.<sup>18</sup> This reluctance to travel is hardly surprising, given the estimated time required to reach Seville from various points of departure. Whereas travelers leaving Córdoba could reach Seville in a few days, the trip on foot from Cáceres or Granada could take three weeks, from Madrid a month, and from León over six weeks.<sup>19</sup> The stay in Seville before embarking for the Indies could last another two or three months. Hence emigrants from outside Seville's hinterland might be on the road and away from home three or four months or more before departing on a transoceanic journey which, although tedious and uncomfortable, might not have appeared to entail nearly the risk and insecurity of the journey up to that point (and could be considerably shorter). There is perhaps little reason to wonder why Seville and Andalucía continued to supply the largest numbers of women willing to travel to the Indies, or why Isabel de Mayorga decided to stay home.

But stay home she did, perhaps because the journey was unappealing, perhaps because she and her family decided that her husband's prospects looked less than rosy. The stimulus to most early modern migration was, of course, real or perceived opportunity, particularly when access to potential opportunities was enhanced by the existence of networks of kinship and acquaintance that provided needed information and assistance. In the largest sense the most important connection between internal mobility and transatlantic migration lay in the predisposition of people at practically all levels of society to relocate temporarily or permanently, principally in conjunction with the search for economic opportunity and security, whether this meant going off to study at the university or to enter a religious order or the army, going

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<sup>17</sup> Boyd-Bowman, *Patterns of Spanish Emigration*, 25, 49, 72.

<sup>18</sup> According to Boyd-Bowman, *Patterns of Spanish Emigration*, 49-50, 75, over half of the female emigrants in the period 1540-59 were from Andalucía (accounting for 30 percent of the emigrants from Seville itself), and in the period 1560-79 the city of Seville sent 34 percent of all the women migrants.

<sup>19</sup> Jacobs, "Legal and Illegal Emigration," 66-67.

to work as an artisan, innkeeper, or entrepreneur in a booming port city like Seville, or moving to another town or village where access to land appeared promising or to marry. This willingness to move, and the means to do so afforded by networks of communication and personal ties, affected people's decisions and activities after they arrived in the Indies as well, so that the entire leapfrogging and interconnected process of settling one area after another reflected the interplay between the rapid consolidation and stabilization of Spanish society, on the one hand, and the predisposition to move on in search of other opportunities on the other.

Consider the example of Diego Guerra of Cáceres, who went to the Indies in the 1530s, ostensibly seeking his father, Alonso Guerra. Alonso Guerra was in Peru, where he had received an *encomienda* from Francisco Pizarro and by 1537 was sitting on the city council of San Miguel de Piura. His son Diego first arrived in the Indies in Puerto Rico, then moved on to Hispaniola, where he helped put down an attempted slave revolt. After a couple of years he departed for the isthmian region (Tierra Firme) and subsequently for Peru. Although by then he had heard his father was living in San Miguel, he did not find him there, only finally encountering him, apparently fortuitously, while participating in a military expedition; his father met the expedition with supplies. In addition to Diego, who became his father's principal heir, four other sons of Alonso Guerra, two of them Dominican friars, made their way to Peru; one left Peru for Chile and died there with Pedro de Valdivia. Last, Alonso Guerra's brother Diego Guerra de la Vega went to New Spain, where he served as a secret royal envoy and produced chronicles of the conquest of Mexico. Subsequently he entered the priesthood. He too eventually ended up in Peru and died in San Miguel. The careers of these six members of the Guerra family known to have emigrated to the Indies, then, virtually covered the Spanish empire, encompassing the Caribbean, Mexico, Tierra Firme, Peru and Chile.<sup>20</sup>

The mobility of Spanish immigrants tied the developing societies of Spanish America together in ways that are only now attracting some

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<sup>20</sup> For the Guerra family see Altman, *Emigrants and Society*, 230-231. For a detailed examination of how kinship ties and family strategies functioned to convey members of one noble family from Cáceres to Peru, see Ida Altman, "Spanish Hidalgos and America: The Ovandos of Cáceres," *The Americas* 43, 3 (1987).

attention.<sup>21</sup> Such movement bound these societies to one another just as transatlantic migration tied Spanish America to Spain.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore in the Indies the mobility of Spaniards and other Europeans was but one element in a complex of migratory movements. These included the migration of indigenous groups and individuals, which encompassed movements that predated the arrival of Europeans as well as new, altered, or accelerated forms; and the movements of Africans and people of African descent which, since they involved both slaves and free people, also showed variety in their direction and causation.<sup>23</sup>

The Caribbean, the first arena of Spanish activity in the Indies, in a sense epitomizes how these various migratory movements interacted, while at the same time the outcome was unique. Francisco Manuel de Landa's "Relación de la isla" of Puerto Rico, compiled in 1530-31,<sup>24</sup> showed that the island had undergone radical transformation in the generation following its conquest. The two towns, San Juan and San Germán, between them had 415 free adult residents, mainly Spanish men and women but including a few free blacks or mulattos and probably some mestizos. There were 2287 African slaves and around 1000 Indian slaves. About a fifth of the Spanish and African residents

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<sup>21</sup> Noble David Cook, in "Migration in Colonial Peru: An Overview," in David J. Robinson, ed., *Migration in Colonial Spanish America* (Cambridge, 1990), comments that "There is probably a significant, although as yet an under-studied link between commercial and plantation families on Hispaniola and coastal Peru" (49). See also comments on connections between Spanish activities in the Caribbean and early Mexico in Ida Altman, "Spanish Society in Mexico City After the Conquest," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 71, 3 (1991).

<sup>22</sup> Doubtless the same was true for the movements of British and French migrants within their respective colonial empires. See, for example, Richard Dunn, "The English Sugar Islands and the Founding of South Carolina," in T.H. Breen, ed., *Shaping Southern Society* (New York, 1976), 48-58 on the relocation of British settlers from Barbados to South Carolina.

<sup>23</sup> See David J. Robinson, *Migration in Colonial Spanish America* (Cambridge and New York, 1990), especially Robinson's "Introduction: Towards a Typology of Migration in Colonial Spanish America."

<sup>24</sup> AGI Justicia 106, no. 3. Francisco Manuel de Landa, as *teniente de gobernador* of Puerto Rico, collected the information in this account which was not, strictly speaking, a census but rather a listing of all African and Indian slaves and servants held by Puerto Rico's Spanish residents. Since probably virtually every Spaniard held at least an Indian slave or two (including the most humble *estancieros* and *criados* in the countryside), the compilation comes close to being a census of the island's population.

were women, although women might have constituted a majority of the Indian slaves. Nearly all these people were migrants. Europeans and Africans came from across the Atlantic or from Hispaniola, and the Indian slaves generally were presumed to have come from elsewhere ("de fuera"). Occasionally this was noted specifically; in one case four were said to have been brought from Yucatan. Only 486 people were listed as "free" Indians in repartimiento, or *nabortas*, in service to Spaniards. Apart from the small number of indigenous women ("de la tierra") married to Spaniards, they apparently were the only remaining native inhabitants of Puerto Rico.

By 1530, then, migrants from Europe, Africa, and other parts of the Caribbean collectively outnumbered the indigenous people of Puerto Rico by more than seven to one. Their presence underscored not only the drastic demographic changes that had taken place on the island but also the speed with which people were moving or being moved around and coming into contact with one another. The rapid and seemingly unstoppable reduction of the native populations of the large islands where Spaniards first settled led to the importation of labor from other islands on a considerable scale; population decline, combined with a shift from gold mining to sugar cultivation, which Europeans already associated with the use of African labor, stimulated the importation of African slaves. These new migratory patterns set off by Spanish activities did not entirely displace preexisting ones, however. Residents of Puerto Rico, for example, complained in the 1520s about the periodic raids of Caribs;<sup>25</sup> most likely these raids represented a continuation of an older phenomenon, although perhaps new kinds of plunder made the Spanish settlements particularly attractive targets.<sup>26</sup> A high degree of transience characterized Spanish society itself in the Caribbean. Yet despite economic decline and the existence of more promising opportunities on the mainland in the 1520s and 30s, a coherent and fairly stable Spanish society took hold in many places.

The story of Benito de Astorga and consideration of Spanish society in the Caribbean suggests that most of the basic patterns associated with sixteenth century emigration existed virtually from the

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<sup>25</sup> See the description of a raid by 150 Caribs in 1520 in AGI Patronato 176, ramo 6.

<sup>26</sup> Philip P. Boucher, *Cannibal Encounters. Europeans and Island Caribs, 1492-1763* (Baltimore, 1992), 49, notes that from the sixteenth century Caribs carried off Africans from Puerto Rico and kept them as "highly prized" slaves.



outset. People followed their friends and relatives, and emigrants already in the Indies sent back for or returned to get family members and others; they maintained their connections through letters and other networks of communication; they returned home, temporarily or permanently. Such patterns, present as they were from the earliest years, over time did not so much demonstrate real changes in form but rather underwent a gradual process of elaboration which in large degree was the natural outgrowth of the increasing size, and therefore complexity, of the movement, as well as of the development and consolidation of society in the Indies.

The choices of emigrants with regard to destinations, careers, business associations, and marriages probably reflected the strength of two kinds of important connections: first, their ties with a specific point of origin and with other emigrants from that place (with all that would imply for preexisting ties of kinship, friendship, patronage and the like); and second, bonds arising from experiences in the Indies, perhaps most particularly early experiences, even including the journey itself. The interaction of those two sets of connections, both of which were as much emotional as practical, played an important part in shaping associations and preferences of Spaniards in the Indies.

The two kinds of bonds did not function at odds but rather appear largely to have complemented and reinforced each other. The word "amigo" seems to have carried much the same authority and moral weight as terms expressing kinship. Cacereño Lorenzo de Aldana left his houses, lands, and slaves in Peru in his will of 1562 to Diego Hurtado, whom he called "my friend and brother who has been in my house and company."<sup>27</sup> Aldana and Hurtado had no familial relationship, nor did they share a common place of origin in Spain. One of the most striking elements in the story of Benito de Astorga and his wife Isabel de Mayorga is the cohesiveness of the Spanish community in Santo Domingo, which in this case again apparently resulted more from long-term association and friendship than from kinship or common origin. In all at least thirteen people in Santo Domingo, including judges of the Audiencia, the prior of the Dominican monastery, and the treasurer of Hispaniola and his wife, became involved in Astorga's efforts to convince his wife to come, whether through letters or actual

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<sup>27</sup> See José Rafael Zarama, "Reseña histórica," app. 1, 189-196 (Pasto, 1942).

visits to her and her family in northern Spain. Only one of these individuals was from Astorga's home town in León and knew his wife before going to Santo Domingo. This witness testified that the person who made the greatest efforts on Astorga's behalf, Melchor de Castro, did so because he and Astorga were close friends — "eran y son muy amigos."<sup>28</sup> Castro, like Astorga, had lived for many years on Hispaniola.

Perhaps the classic example in which the close bonds forged by friendship and shared experience substituted for, and finally were transformed into, ties of kinship and common origin was that of two men who were present at Cajamarca, Lucas Martínez Vegaso and Alonso Ruiz. Lucas Martínez was from Trujillo, and although there is no evidence that Alonso Ruiz was, the two were partners from at least the time they arrived in Peru. In 1540 Ruiz left Peru for Martínez's home town of Trujillo with the intention of marrying his partner's sister. Both contributed to Isabel Martínez's dowry, and each held the other's power of attorney during their years of separation, which turned out to be permanent, although they might not have foreseen that when Ruiz left Peru. Ruiz became not only a member of Martínez's family but a prominent trujillano as well, holding a seat on the city council in the 1550s and purchasing *señorío* of the village of Madroñera close to Trujillo.<sup>29</sup> Their story points to a perceived equivalence between bonds based on kinship and common origin and others that developed from new experiences and circumstances that generated loyalty and trust. This enlargement of the circle of personal association based on activities and choices connected with moving to the Indies contributed to the forging of new allegiances, hence laying the basis for the construction of new communities while simultaneously allowing preservation of older ties that kept the connection with relatives and friends at home alive.

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<sup>28</sup> The testimony in this case is in Archivo General de Indias (AGI) Santo Domingo 9, ramo 2, no. 18. The man from Astorga was Abel Meléndez, who apparently went to the island in the early 1520s, by which time Benito de Astorga had been there many years.

<sup>29</sup> For Lucas Martínez see Éfraim Trelles Arestegui, *Lucas Martínez Vegazo: Funcionamiento de una encomienda peruana inicial* (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 1982); and James Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca: A Social and Biographical Study of the First Conquerors of Peru* (Austin, 1972), 300-305 and the same for Alonso Ruiz, 343-346.

The tendency of Spaniards in the Indies to move around and move on, while crucially important in shaping societies there, nonetheless should be understood within a context that also was characterized by a fair degree of stability. Even if people eventually moved on or returned home, they frequently stayed in one place long enough to contribute to the cohesiveness and consolidation of the evolving American societies while at the same time they generated contacts and connections that might prove enduring. One sees this in the case of that minority of emigrants who returned to Castile. Half of the returnees (for whom length of absence can be determined) to Trujillo and three-quarters of the returnees to Cáceres stayed away from home at least ten years.<sup>30</sup>

A small number of returnees stayed in Spain long enough that their eventual decision to leave again for the Indies would place them in the category of second-time emigrants (rather than temporary visitors). Textile entrepreneur Cristóbal de Ribas, part of a group of Brihuega emigrants that settled in Puebla in the second half of the sixteenth century, spent such long periods at a spell in Spain and in Mexico that he might plausibly be considered as participating fully in society in both places during his adulthood. Born around 1530, he arrived in Puebla de los Angeles by 1561, possibly already married. He returned to Brihuega in 1572, having sold his textile manufacturing business for 10,000 pesos. His brother Alonso de Ribas, with whom he might originally have traveled to Mexico, apparently stayed on, at least for a while. Twenty years later, when Cristóbal would have been at least sixty, he returned to Puebla with an entourage consisting of at least twenty-four people, including his wife, nine children, seven grandchildren, and the in-laws of one daughter.<sup>31</sup> Careers such as his that involved one or more moves—whether back and forth between two places or from one to another and then perhaps a third—entailed considerable mobility that affected many members of a kin group while at the same time they fostered continuity and helped to maintain the ties between an individual or family and a specific place (or places).

The increasing size and complexity of the sixteenth-century transatlantic movement meant the fairly early appearance of labor

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<sup>30</sup> See Altman, *Emigrants and Society*, 250-251.

<sup>31</sup> AGI Indiferente General 2054; *Catálogo de pasajeros*, vol. 3, no. 3415 and vol. 7, nos. 2427, 2428, 2573, 2575.

migration —people going to the Indies in response to specific business or employment opportunities. This is a phenomenon that has not been commonly associated with Spanish emigration in this period. Yet some time ago Boyd-Bowman pointed to a case of what surely was labor migration from the mining town of Guadalcanal in the Sierra Morena. He noted the great “exodus” of some 150 people in the mid-1530s after the discovery of silver in Taxco, apparently following a group of ten men who went to Mexico in 1527 and became involved in mining there. One of these men, a miner in Taxco, returned to Spain and then went back to Mexico in 1536.<sup>32</sup>

A number of individuals left Trujillo for the Indies to work in a specific capacity there. Several members of two generations of the Valencia family, for example, went to Peru to work for Lucas Martínez Vegaso, who very likely was their relative.<sup>33</sup> In individual cases of this kind, however, it often is difficult to distinguish between what could be called labor or employment recruitment and other types of personal and private recruitment. This ambiguity arises particularly in connection with the people who traveled to the Indies as “criados.” The term *criado* encompassed a variety of statuses. A *criado* or *criada* made a contract with an employer on an individual basis, and the term of service often did not outlast the journey itself. Obviously there is a considerable difference between this kind of employment contract—the purpose of which often was to secure license or passage to the Indies with no subsequent continuing obligation—and the terms by which British or French indentured servants took passage; on arriving in America they were required to perform a standard number of years of obligatory service. Since only a minority of Spanish *criados* arrived in the Indies under obligation to fulfill a work contract with a specific employer (slaves brought to the Indies, of course, normally remained slaves), *criado* status did not necessarily equate with labor recruitment or migration.

There were, however, clear examples of labor recruitment, such as the movement of people, many of them involved in textile manufacture, from the Castilian town of Brihuega (and other towns nearby, like

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<sup>32</sup> Boyd-Bowman, *Patterns of Spanish Emigration*, 21.

<sup>33</sup> See Altman, *Emigrants and Society*, 227; and Trelles, *Lucas Martínez Vegazo*, 174-177.

Fuentelaencina and Pastrana) to Puebla de los Angeles in the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>34</sup> Preliminary examination of this group has shown that well over 300 people —163 men, 63 women, and at least 100 children— left Brihuega for Mexico. The great majority settled in Puebla, although some moved out to nearby but connected places such as Cholula and the valley of Atlixco, and a handful were based in Mexico City.<sup>35</sup> More than a third of the emigrants left Brihuega in the 1570s, and the number of departures in the 1580s and 90s continued to be high. The group as a whole, while it included individuals and families of varying wealth and status, consisted entirely of commoners; not one person claimed *hidalgo* status.

The impetus for the movement lay in the establishment in Puebla in the 1550s and 60s of members of several families that would play a key and even dominant role in the development of Puebla's textile industry in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Chief among this first generation of Brihuega emigrants were five members of the Anzures family, four sons and a daughter of Rodrigo de Anzures, who was both an *obraje* (textile factory) owner and *escribano* (notary) in Brihuega. In Puebla two of his sons served as escribanos and in other offices as well as establishing *obrajes*. Owing principally to their success, eventually at least thirty (the number probably is much higher) of their relatives, in-laws, and their in-laws' relatives went to Puebla (see Table). The success of other individuals like Cristóbal de Ribas (discussed above), Juan de Brihuega, and Juan de Pastrana, all of whom were in Puebla by the mid-1560s, had a similar impact. Ribas, who had sold his *obraje* to Juan Barranco (a relative of the Anzures family) and returned to Brihuega by 1573, was related by marriage to the Angulo family, which also became prominent in textiles and office-holding in Puebla. Andrés

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<sup>34</sup> The connection between Brihuega and Puebla first came to the attention of scholars when Enrique Otte published "Cartas privadas de Puebla del siglo XVI," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas* 3 (1966) (many of these letters were destined for Puebla; they also appear in Otte, *Cartas privadas*), and Guadalupe Albi-Romero published "La sociedad de Puebla de los Angeles en el siglo XVI," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas* 7 (1970), based on research in the Archive of the Indies.

<sup>35</sup> Discussion of the Brihuega emigrants is based primarily on Otte, "Cartas privadas;" Albi-Romero, "La sociedad de Puebla," the *Catálogo de pasajeros de Indias*, vols. 4-7 (I have been unable so far to consult vol. 5, part 2); and AGI Indiferente General, legs. 2054-2061.

de Angulo returned to Brihuega in 1578 after spending fourteen years in Puebla. His sons Pedro and Gabriel went back to Puebla in 1582 and owned obrajes there in the 1580s and 90s.<sup>36</sup> The large Pastrana and Brihuega clans also were related to each other.

The Brihuega group exhibited classic patterns associated with labor migration: initial establishment of men, who subsequently returned for or sent for wives and children; direct recruitment for specific kinds of employment (fullers, cloth cutters and the like); temporary and permanent return migration; and the continuing departure of single young men all through the period. Despite the increasing presence of women and children (28 percent of the adult migrants were women, and of the total group including children, at least 35 percent were female), in the 1570s, for example, 40 percent (44) of the emigrants were single men. Many of these men, of course, went with other relatives or as criados or joined someone already in Puebla. There also are indications among the migrant group of moves connected with the search for employment and economic opportunity that preceded emigration to Puebla. Members of the Pliego family, for example, were living in the Alpujarras in the 1570s before moving on to Mexico.

The patterns discerned among the emigrants to Puebla suggest that while the nature and direction of the Brihuega movement was distinctive—linked as it was to the part played by the Brihuega entrepreneurs and artisans in developing Puebla's textile industry—nonetheless the movement as a whole resembled others that were not necessarily conditioned by recruitment for a specific enterprise. A comparison between emigrant groups from two quite different localities in the 1570s—Brihuega and Trujillo—is suggestive. The Brihuega group of approximately one hundred included essentially fourteen family groups (twelve families of two parents and at least one child, and two men returning to Mexico with their families), two married couples with no children, and two men whose families joined them within the same decade; as mentioned, 40 percent of the group consisted of single men. A group of around the same size that left Trujillo for New Spain in the same decade included twenty-two family groups (fourteen families

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<sup>36</sup> See AGI Indiferente General 2054 and the *Catálogo de pasajeros*, 4, no. 3726 for Andrés de Angulo, who went to Mexico with his wife Isabel de Ribas, five sons and three daughters in 1565. See Albi Romero, "La sociedad de Puebla," 132, 135-136 for activities of sons Pedro and Gabriel.

consisting of two parents and at least one child and eight of one parent and children), and two married couples with no children. In this group, however, there were only seven single men and one single woman.<sup>37</sup>

Timing may in large part account for the differing composition of the groups. Emigration from Trujillo got underway much earlier, and the departure of single young men seems to have reached its peak in the 1530s, when nearly 130 left for the Indies. By the 1570s the Trujillo movement might be said to have reached its mature period, and the migrant group had become much more familial in nature.<sup>38</sup> Migration from Brihuega barely got started in the 1550s and only reached sizeable proportions in the 1570s. The group of slightly over one hundred people who went to Puebla from Brihuega in the 1590s, however, resembles more closely the "mature" pattern of the 1570s Trujillo group that went to Mexico. This 1590s group included seven married couples, seventeen families of parents and at least one child, two women with children going to join their husbands, and two pairs of siblings. There were eleven criados and two other "solteros," a considerably smaller proportion of single men than in the 1570s Brihuega group.

It is possible, then, that more detailed analysis of the makeup of migrant groups from various localities and of the timing of departures will tend to show that the phenomenon of "labor migration" may well be subsumed, at least in the sixteenth century, within more general migratory trends, by which a movement usually began with the departure mainly of young men and only after some time became essentially familial in nature. The existence of such a pattern also suggests that in many cases the "rhythm" and trajectory of transatlantic migration from any particular locality might reflect more strongly (although doubtless not exclusively) the influence of local circumstances and considerations rather than the changing attractions of society in the Indies. By the mid-sixteenth century Spanish society in central Mexico already had achieved a notable level of consolidation;<sup>39</sup> nonetheless the

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<sup>37</sup> See Altman, "A New World in the Old," in Altman and Horns, eds., "*To Make America*," 40-47 for discussion of this group.

<sup>38</sup> See Altman, *Emigrants and Society*, 175, Table 8 and 180-184, Table 10 for a listing of the 1570s group.

<sup>39</sup> See Altman, "Spanish Society in Mexico City;" Julia Hirschberg, "A Social History of Puebla de los Angeles, 1531-1560" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 1976); and Albi-Romero, "La sociedad de Puebla."

timing of the Brihuega migration reveals that, notwithstanding the coincidence of its early stages with increasing stability and prosperity in Mexico, the initial phase of the movement resembled earlier movements to destinations in the Indies during periods of formation and development.

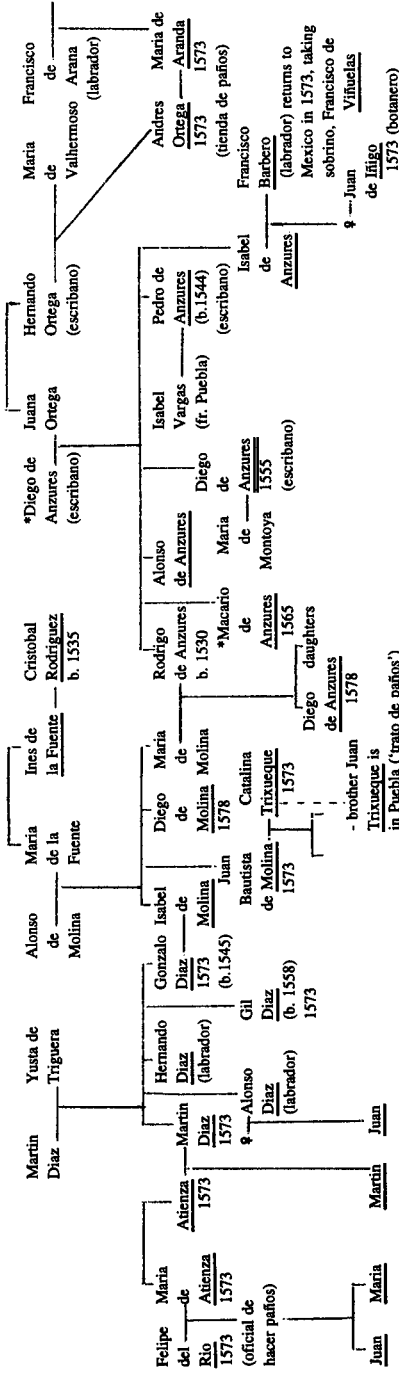
The social and economic impact of the very substantial transfer of people from Brihuega to Puebla must have been widely noticed and discussed in the localities affected. Brihuega had a population of perhaps 4000 residents in the second half of the sixteenth century. Letters from people in Mexico, testimony of prospective emigrants, and the interlocking kinship ties that in some degree might have included virtually the entire place (and hence all the emigrants) suggest that the movement of textile workers and their families was the most dynamic change affecting the town in the period. On the other side, the role of the Brihuega entrepreneurs in developing Puebla's textile industry not only is well known to contemporary scholars but traditionally has received prominent notice, starting with the earliest histories of the city.

The movement from Brihuega to Puebla and other examples that have been briefly discussed here suggest that sixteenth century emigration from Castile to the Indies must be considered in several distinct but related contexts. Strong parallels between Castilian migration and other early modern European movements show that the Castilian movement not only was not so distinctive or peculiar as to form an entirely separate phenomenon; rather it clearly represented the first phase of modern European migration to the Americas, foreshadowing much of what would take place later and elsewhere. The Castilian movement, while fitting well within European transatlantic migration, also can be seen to have consisted of an aggregate of movements from separate localities where particular economic, social, and familial circumstances functioned to determine who might depart (and return), with whom, and to what destinations. The similarities among these local movements in timing, composition, and organization, together with the connections that existed among them, make it possible to discuss Castilian emigration at some level of generality; yet it also is clear that real understanding of the nature of the movement, and of its impact on local society in Spain and on the formation of society in the Indies, requires more detailed study of particular migrant groups and the contexts in which they functioned.



At the outset I suggested that within Spanish American history migration, somewhat inexplicably, has been treated as marginal. In fact it was the indispensable factor that, operating in conjunction with the huge reduction in indigenous populations and simultaneous introduction of large numbers of African slaves, made the Americas what they became after European contact —societies that remained culturally diverse but were increasingly Hispanicized and creolized.

# The Anzures Family of Brihuega and Relations



\* Obraje owner  
Name Emigrated to Puebla  
Name Emigrated and returned to Brihuega  
15.. Date of departure







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