

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo

A Voyage of Rediscovery



Wendy Kramer

Maritime Museum of San Diego



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The word “Cabrillo” is associated with more places, streets, freeways, institutions, businesses, parks, highways, beaches, and marinas in California than any other place name. The name Cabrillo adorns a memorial cross at a far lonely spot on San Miguel Island, is the name of the second most visited National Monument in the United States and the dramatic bridge that conveys millions of visitors into San Diego’s Balboa Park. Murals of Cabrillo’s flagship *San Salvador* illuminate building walls in downtown Santa Barbara, building walls in downtown Ensenada, BC Mexico, the interior of the fabled Avalon Casino, and the outdoor atrium floor of San Diego’s city government complex. This same *San Salvador* is featured at the center of the seal of the City of San Diego as well as on the crest of USS *San Diego* (LPD-22). *San Salvador* has resided atop Balboa Park’s Bell Tower of the Californias as a weathervane for more than a century. Quite possibly the only image extant composed by someone who actually saw the ship has reposed in the form of a petroglyph at an isolated and sacred location in the Jucumba National Wilderness for almost five centuries. Along the Northern California Coast, which Cabrillo himself

probably never saw, his name signifies both a promontory and its lighthouse. Hundreds of miles to the south, on another promontory close to a lighthouse associated with the name Cabrillo, his statue accompanies a replica *padrão* - a stone cross like those erected by Portuguese along the African coast as navigational aids to guide their way to India.

FROM THE HELM

By Ray Ashley, Ph.D., K.C.I.

President/CEO
Maritime Museum of San Diego

Despite all this, until quite recently, we did not know where Cabrillo was born and that ethnically his ancestors may have been Jews or Moors. For many years people thought he might be Portuguese due to a single reference to him as such by a Spanish chronicler writing

three generations after his death, even though the same historian misidentified known Portuguese explorers as Spanish in his narrative. Ironically perhaps, were it not for the mistaken belief that he was Portuguese, and were that belief not ardently pursued and promoted by Portuguese immigrants to California and their descendants, Cabrillo’s name might have retained indefinitely the relative obscurity it held from the time of his death until the end of the nineteenth century, whereupon his career and fame enjoyed an extraordinary renaissance.

We are still not sure where Cabrillo learned to read, to fight with a crossbow, to build ships, to sail them great distances, or to navigate them. We still do not know exactly where he died or is buried. Indeed the only artifact associated with his burial, a cryptic stone found on Santa Rosa Island in 1902, is believed by most authorities to be a fake. We don’t know what he looked like. While his name

Cabrillo’s *San Salvador* sailing along the California coast.

Artist Duncan Gleason



can be found almost everywhere in California, virtually none of the places he claimed to have discovered and named as California's first European explorer remain as he named them. He spent no more than eight weeks in California before he died at one of its Channel Islands.

Sent to find a coastal sea route to China and possibly a navigable strait from the Pacific to the Atlantic, Cabrillo found neither, although both are possible if not practicable in his time.

Perhaps most astonishing of all, the surname "Cabrillo" was not one that he used very often. Other than legal documents where an additional signifier seemed necessary or desirable, for most of his life he was simply Juan Rodríguez. Because he sometimes appended other occupational signifiers to his name, it is likely that Cabrillo also refers to an occupation, but so far no one seems to really know what occupation it might have been. In keeping, his flagship (which he owned personally) was probably referred to far more often as the *Juan Rodríguez* than as the *San Salvador*. Of equally prosaic nature, her first big voyage was not about exploration or finding a new route to Asia: she carried horses to Peru. Of her now famous voyage of exploration, logs and journals of the commander, the master, and the pilot were lost. Depositions taken from her surviving crewmembers at the conclusion of the voyage were lost. Notes from another

master pilot (who ultimately did find the route from New Spain to Asia and return) of additional interviews of the survivors were also lost. The *San Salvador* herself departed for another voyage to Peru following her return from California and she too was lost, somewhere along the way, with all hands.

What is unusual about all of this, is that someone so famous and iconic in our own day should be so obscured from our view for so long by layer after layer of such mysteries.

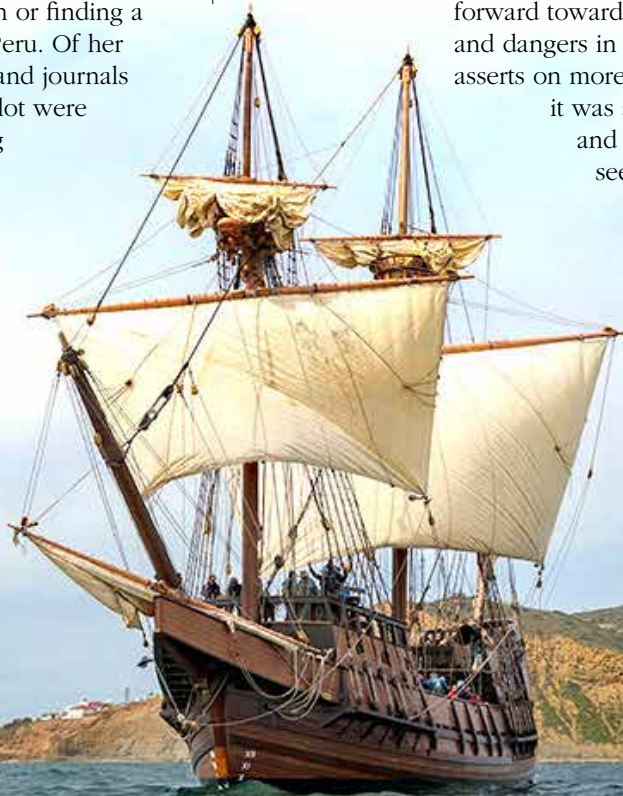
What is unusual about all of this, is that someone so famous and iconic in our own day should be so obscured from our view for so long by layer after layer of such mysteries. But mysteries offer now, as in Cabrillo's day, the most compelling motivation for voyages into other worlds. Our master pilot on this voyage is Dr. Wendy Kramer, who was conducting an

archival investigation into the lives of the first generation of Guatemala's conquistadors via documents generated from legal proceedings, when amongst a host of obscure names she came across one that sounded very familiar. What results, in these pages, is a voyage into a life and the world it unfolded in every bit as fascinating and strange looking backward from our perspective as it must have seemed to Cabrillo himself looking

forward towards exotic prospects and dangers in store. As Dr. Kramer asserts on more than one occasion it was an extraordinary life, and so, as you will soon see, it remains still.

San Salvador sailing off Point Loma and the entrance to San Diego Bay.

Photographer George Adkins



Acknowledgements

To my family and friends, thank you for your patience while I was embroiled in the urgent task of reporting the breaking news from the sixteenth century. I would like to thank the following people for their assistance and dedication while researching and writing this book: Mayda Gutiérrez Rodríguez, translator and patient sounding board over the past few years; Esther González Pérez (in Seville) and Héctor Concohá (in Guatemala), committed archival researchers and dear colleagues. Christopher H. Lutz has my thanks for generously sharing transcriptions, documents and ideas in a continuous to-and-fro over the past 40 years. Indeed, to Chris and to our close colleague W. George Lovell I want to express my appreciation for their constant inspiration and enthusiasm.

I would like to thank historians Carmen Mena García, Pilar Ostos Salcedo, Juan Gil and Consuelo Varela for meeting with me in Seville and proffering research advice and wise counsel. I have the utmost admiration for their bodies of work and their enviable diligence and skill. Though archival work is, by definition, a solitary exercise, I feel heartened and humbled by the company of such esteemed professionals. Working again in Andalucía brought back fond memories of my five years living in Seville and my first exposure to paleography, in the courses I took with Manuel Romero Tallafigo at the University of Seville. I want to thank him for making the study of ancient script and paleography such a fascinating discipline. I would like to thank Nora Piery, also based in Seville, for her sage advice and for encouraging me to commit to this present project.

I felt so honored in 2016 to deliver the keynote speech at the annual history conference, the *Jornadas de Historia Cardenal Portocarrero*, in Palma del Río. At that time, I had the pleasure of meeting the people from the mayor's office; what an amazing group of tireless and dedicated individuals you are! Thank you Emilio J. Navarro Martínez, Alonso Santiago Montero, and Esperanza Caro de la Barrera Martín (the present mayor of Palma del Río). I want to take this opportunity to thank Manuel Muñoz Rojo, official historian of Palma, for his help with both editions of this book, and Professors Manuel D. Pérez Lozano and Antonio García-Abásolo, from the University of Cordoba, for their contribution to the Spanish edition. I was very moved to receive the Medal of the City of Palma del Río in February 2017, in recognition of my research on Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, from then mayor of Palma del Río, José Antonio Ruiz Almenara, who was extremely supportive right from the start and had the tenacity, vision and intelligence to encourage the publication of my research findings, first in Spanish and now in English.

I want to thank Iris Engstrand, Cynthia van Stralen and Molly McClain, the editors of my first article about Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, published in *The Journal of San Diego History*. Mosa McNeilly, Angela Calvuen, Lisa Maldonado and Patti Bayley provided additional translation and editing help in Spanish and English. Many thanks to my dear friend, Sarah Jane, who in phone calls back and forth from Toronto to Los Angeles, starting in August 2015, encouraged me to keep on with the research, as this finding was indeed worth documenting.

A heartfelt thank you to Iris Engstrand, Professor *emerita* at the University of San Diego, engaged and inspired historian, who has been especially hospitable and generous during my visits to San Diego, and who is one of the editors of this present book. Bob and Nancy Munson were very enthusiastic right from the start, sharing most generously their own sources and research expertise. I also wish to thank the Spanish Honorary Consul in San Diego, María Angeles O'Donnell-Olson, for her support and encouragement. The director of the House of Spain, Jesús Benayas, organized the first talk on Cabrillo I gave in English, and has been extremely accommodating with his time, helping with translations and logistics. The organizers of the Cabrillo festival in San Diego, who welcomed me to their events last year with kind spirits and open hearts, also have my thanks.

I have to thank historian Harry Kelsey, Cabrillo's biographer, for his ground-breaking research in the 1980s on Cabrillo, which helped pave the way for this present study. In addition, I want to thank Peter Rowe, a journalist at *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, for the engaging first article that he wrote about my research. The executive director and curator of ships at the Maritime Museum of San Diego, Ray Ashley, was inspiring with his knowledge about Cabrillo's voyage from Mexico to California, and I enjoyed talks with him and his colleague Susan Sirota during my visits to the Museum. I would like to thank Dr. Ashley and the librarian of the Maritime Museum, Kevin Sheehan, who is the main editor of this present work, for their dedication and their insightful contribution to this project.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this book to the people of Palma del Río, Cobán, Ensenada and San Diego. Thank you for your kindness and interest while I pieced together the story of this singular person, who has touched all of our lives and forms part of our history. Last of all, I take pause to express my keen gratitude to the people who kept the records, and to all those who have safeguarded them ever since.

Wendy Kramer, Ph.D.

PROLOGUE

The author of this ground-breaking work has made a discovery with far-reaching effects. It concerns a well known but temporarily mis-identified personage in the history of Pacific Exploration in general and specifically the history of the Cabrillo National Monument in San Diego, California.

The Monument was founded in 1913 to honor the Spanish explorer Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo who visited San Diego Bay in 1542 and named it San Miguel. In 1892 a special re-enactment of Cabrillo's discovery 350 years before was featured on San Diego's waterfront. In 1915 a replica of his flagship *San Salvador* was a part of the Balboa Park international fair and became a symbol of Spanish discovery atop the Museum of Man.

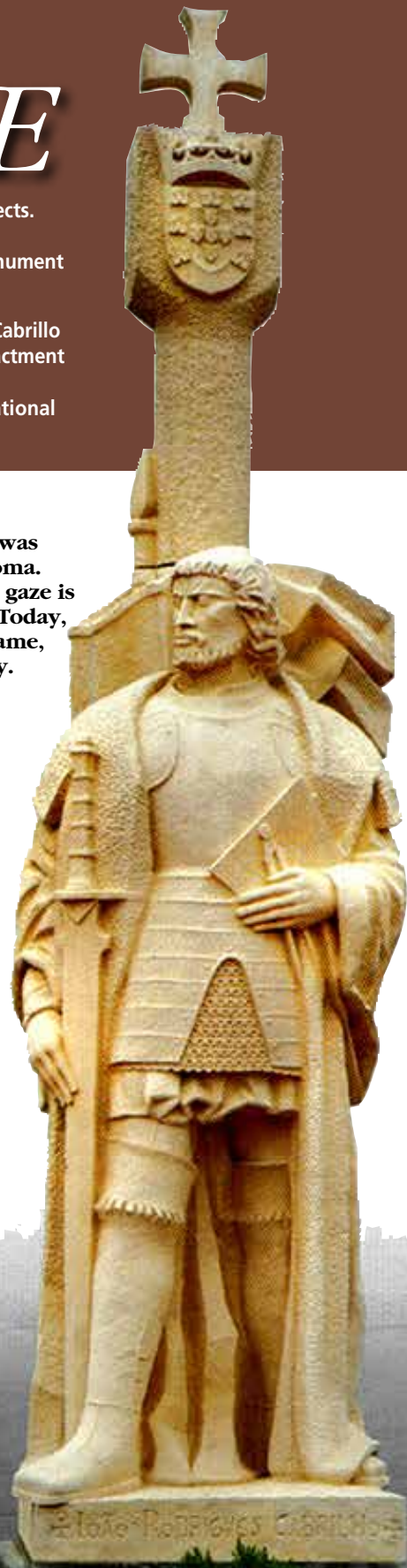
This statue commemorating the 400th anniversary of the voyage of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was first dedicated on September 28, 1942. In 1949 it was moved to its present location at Cabrillo National Monument on Point Loma. The current statue is actually a replica, dating from 1988. Here Cabrillo's gaze is directed towards the bay he named San Miguel - modern-day San Diego. Today, Cabrillo's origins as a Spaniard have been definitively established. His name, however, is still strongly associated with the local Portuguese community.

Photo courtesy of David Bernhard

Somehow in the early 1930s, several Portuguese residents living in Point Loma found a reference in a book by Antonio Herrera published in 1615 that named the commander of a small three-ship expedition "Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo Portuguese" as if he had a third last name. Also mentioned were Bartolomé Ferrer (later miscalled Ferrelo), chief pilot, and others including Antonio Correra (Correira) who was actually Portuguese but not identified as such. The index and marginal note both list the commander's name as simply Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo. Because these errors were carried forward in George Davidson's Coastal and Geodetic survey of 1850, the Portuguese assumed that Cabrillo was Portuguese.

The administrative history of the Cabrillo Monument (p.117) explains how Cabrillo was reinvented as Portuguese:

Until 1934 when the Park Service became responsible for the monument, the explorer Cabrillo usually had been grouped together with other Spanish figures such as Balboa and Father Junípero Serra. The change of emphasis from Spanish to Portuguese received a great deal of impetus when John R. White, the first administrator of Cabrillo became aware that while there was virtually no Spanish community in San Diego, there were a sizable number of Portuguese. In addition, the Grand Council of Cabrillo Civic Clubs had been formed in San Francisco during this time "to recognize Portuguese contributions to California and to civilization in general." Manuel Sylva, the group's president, took an active interest in assuring that the monument acknowledge Cabrillo as Portuguese.





Above and Left: These charts from the 1519 Miller Atlas produced by the Portuguese cartographers Lopo Homem, Pedro Reinel and Jorge Reinel, show respective Spanish and Portuguese landfalls and claims in the Atlantic world, each distinguished by flags bearing the Portuguese or Castilian coat of arms. Despite ongoing imperial rivalry between the two crowns, Portuguese mariners frequently served as expert seafarers for the Spaniards throughout their overseas expansion. During the 1542 expedition commanded by the Spaniard Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, a number of Portuguese participated, including Antonio Correia (Correira).

Courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France

From that time until the present work, there was no actual documented proof that Cabrillo was Spanish. That, however, has now changed and the statement made by historian Dr. Harry Kelsey in the 1998 edition of his biography of Cabrillo now rings true: "If Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was indeed Portuguese, neither the man himself nor his friends nor his relatives nor even his enemies seem to have mentioned that fact in the hundreds of pages of testimony that document the family's *calidad* (quality) and *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood)." (p. 6).

Therefore, this remarkable volume by Wendy Kramer puts the matter to rest. The Portuguese community needs to be honored for its dedication in keeping the memory of the original Cabrillo expedition alive and promoting a love of history among its young people while the Spanish community can now take part officially in the annual Cabrillo festival attended by descendants of all nationalities, including the Native peoples who inhabited this land and witnessed Cabrillo's landing on September 28, 1542, when three ships sailing under the Spanish flag arrived at Ballast Point.

Iris H.W. Engstrand, Ph.D.

Professor *Emerita*, University of San Diego

Introduction: Finding Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo

Modern technology affords new opportunities as well as new situations to historians engaged in archival research.¹ Occasionally, exciting findings are encountered in digital format and online in isolation in front of a screen, rather than in some timeless archive reading room leafing through a bundle of ancient manuscripts. So it was with my most recent archival research. In September 2015, I made a significant discovery that generated considerable interest: documents in which Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, the first European who sailed to the coast of California, declared himself a native of Palma de Micer Gilio, modern-day Palma del Río in Córdoba, Spain.² The international press and digital media reported the discovery worldwide and it was considered particularly newsworthy in California, Latin America, Spain and Portugal.³

In order to contextualize the circumstances of this finding, it is worth mentioning briefly the focus of my research over the years. Since the early 1980s, when I was based in Seville and carrying out research at the General Archive of the Indies (Archivo General de Indias, hereafter the AGI), I have been assembling biographical data on the first generation

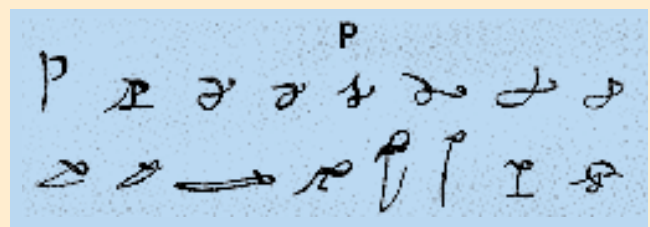
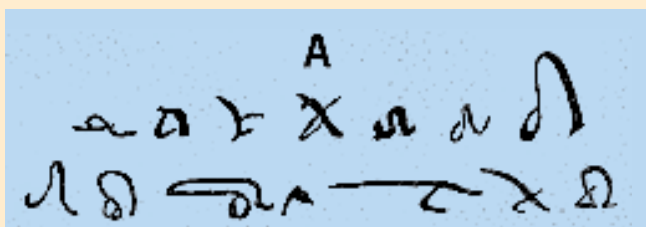
Advances in the field of digital humanities provide new opportunities. Archival historians may now conduct at least part of their investigations far from the physical location of the documents they must consult. The development of web portals such as Pares (Portal de Archivos Españoles) is crucial in this process. The inclusion of subject fields has further aided in tracing connections between ideas, persons and places vital to the writing of history. Our current knowledge of the origins of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo has benefited significantly from the use of this technology.

The screenshot shows the PARES website interface. At the top, it says 'MINISTERIO DE EDUCACIÓN, CULTURA Y DEPORTE - Portal de Archivos Españoles'. Below that is the 'ARES' logo and 'PORTAL DE ARCHIVOS ESPAÑOLES'. A search bar contains the text 'Resultados de la búsqueda por el texto Rodríguez, en el Archivo: Archivo General de Indias, entre las fechas: 1531 y 1532, dentro de: Audiencia de Guatemala'. Below the search bar are filters for 'Niveles Inferiores' and 'Subir Nivel'. A table lists search results with columns for 'TITULO', 'SIGNATURA', 'FECHA CREACIÓN', 'FECHA FORMACIÓN', and 'DIG.'. The table contains eight entries, all related to Juan Rodríguez de Palma, including licenses and land concessions. Below the table is an 'Ayuda:' section and a footer with the text 'Resultados de la búsqueda en el sitio web del AGI, el Portal de los Archivos Españoles, del nombre "Juan Rodríguez de Palma". Guatemala 393, L.1, F.13-18, Concesiones, exenciones y licencias a él y a su prima Juana Rodríguez. (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. Archivo General de Indias. Página del sitio web: <http://pares.mcu.es>.)'

	TITULO	SIGNATURA	FECHA CREACIÓN	FECHA FORMACIÓN	DIG.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Licencia a Juan Rodríguez de Palma	GUATEMALA, 393, L.1, F.13V-14	1532-5-9		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exención de almorjafazgo a Juan Rodríguez de Palma	GUATEMALA, 393, L.1, F.14-14V	1532-5-9		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exención de almorjafazgo a Juan Rodríguez de Palma	GUATEMALA, 393, L.1, F.16-17	1532-5-24		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exención de almorjafazgo a Juan Rodríguez	GUATEMALA, 393, L.1, F.16-17	1532-5-24		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Licencia para matrimonio a Juan Rodríguez	GUATEMALA, 393, L.1, F.16V	1532-5-24		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Concesión de tierras a Juan Rodríguez	GUATEMALA, 393, L.1, F.17V-18	1532-5-24		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Concesión de terreno a Juan Rodríguez de Palma	GUATEMALA, 393, L.1, F.15V-16	1532-5-24		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Licencia para esclavos a Juan Rodríguez Palma	GUATEMALA, 393, L.1, F.16	1532-5-24		

of conquistador-*encomenderos* who accompanied the captain Pedro de Alvarado and his brothers to Guatemala in the 1520s and 1530s, sent there by Hernán Cortés from Mexico.⁴ The topic of my Ph.D. dissertation, which was published in book form in 1994, was the distribution of tribute, services and *encomiendas* to the conquerors of Guatemala from 1524 to 1544.⁵

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo (hereafter Cabrillo) was a conqueror and an *encomendero* of Guatemala, and although he held a large *encomienda*, it was



As these examples demonstrate, a thorough familiarity with different styles of calligraphy is essential in order to read and understand sixteenth-century manuscript sources.

his prominent position leading the expedition to the Pacific Coast of California in 1542 that distinguished him as an important historical figure.⁶ During my five years researching in the AGI, I met the Californian historian Harry Kelsey, who was conducting research for a detailed biography of Cabrillo and we had many discussions about his role in the conquest of Guatemala and the exploration of California. The life of Cabrillo, particularly the history of his *encomienda* towns had been a topic of interest for me and I was certainly intrigued that, unlike many of the conquerors of Guatemala, his place of birth and country of origin had not been ascertained. Based on their archival research, modern historians felt that his logical place of birth was Spain, but they were never able to prove where in Spain he was born. Similarly, another group believed that he had been born in Portugal, but a lack of reliable evidence meant that the issue remained unresolved.⁷

Sixty years after Cabrillo's death, Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas (1549-1625/6), a royal historian of Spain and the Indies, published a general history titled *Historia General de los hechos de los Castellanos*

The Archive of the Indies (Archivo General de Indias), Seville, Spain, contains a treasure trove of information on the history of Spain's overseas empire.

en las Islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Ocean. In it, he wrote that the captain of the *San Salvador* was "Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo Portugués."⁸ Herrera's source has not been determined, and since then, his designation of Cabrillo as Portuguese has never been verified. Herrera's assertion of Cabrillo's citizenship certainly was not credited by the Costa Rican diplomat and historian, Manuel María de Peralta (1847-1930), who in a book of sixteenth-century documents from the Spanish archives that he edited and published in 1883, referenced Cabrillo in the following way: "Before [Francis] Drake, only a distinguished Spanish sailor, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, had ventured to such high latitudes along the west coast of America, exploring the coast of California on orders from the Viceroy of Mexico, don Antonio de Mendoza, in whose honor he named Cape Mendocino (1542)."⁹

In his biography of Cabrillo published in 1986, Kelsey wrote that neither his own family and offspring nor those who knew him in Santiago de Guatemala mentioned that he was Portuguese. This is notable, because in the conquest of New Spain, the largest group of foreigners was the Portuguese conquerors, and information of this type was not generally concealed.¹⁰ In the documentation submitted to the Crown in the sixteenth century by conquerors and their descendants to prove their services in the conquest, country of birth is often mentioned, either by them or their witnesses. In the first Guatemalan Town Council book, there is record in March and April 1528 of "Domingo, Portugués" who was granted a *solar* (a plot of land), and "Juan Alvares, Portugués" who was given agricultural land.¹¹ The list of deceased persons' estates in Guatemala for the years 1536 and 1537 includes reference to an "Andres Jorge, Portugués" and an "Alvaro Gonzales, Portugués."¹²





The AGI (Archivo General de Indias) conserves thousands of bundles of documents (*legajos*), each of which is numbered and shelved according to a series of long-established archival protocols related either to the geographical focus of the documentary materials (e.g. Guatemala, Filipinas, Lima, etc.) or their thematic nature (e.g. Justicia, Contaduría, Patronato, etc.). Accurate indices and descriptive aids are essential tools used by the archival historian to sift through this vast mass of information. For the time of Cabrillo - the early to mid-sixteenth century - the researcher must also have a thorough understanding of the palaeography (handwriting and abbreviations) and vocabulary of the period. Such knowledge is highly specialized, and proficiency is only acquired after years of study.



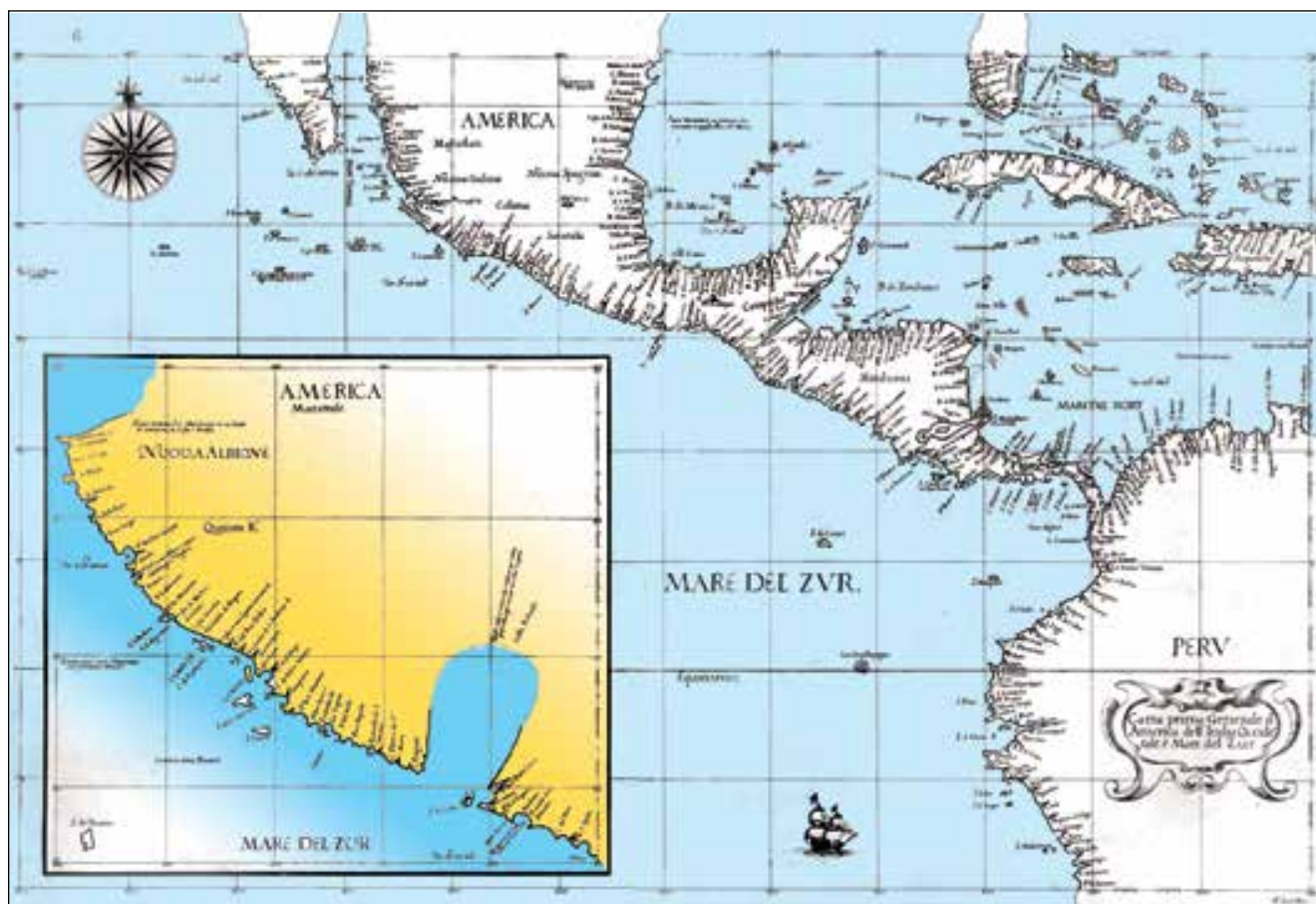
Recently, I renewed my efforts to complete social histories on the first generation of conquistadors-encomenderos in Guatemala. The main sources that I consulted were the archives in Guatemala and Spain and the early Guatemalan Town Council books from 1530-1553 housed in the Hispanic Society of America in New York City.¹³ These records of the municipal meetings record detailed chronological information on a town's inhabitants and their participation in town affairs, and this source had not been available during my previous research. Working alphabetically through my long list of early Spanish residents, I reached the letter "C" and the name of the legal representative of the town council, the *Procurador* of Guatemala Gabriel de Cabrera, who was appointed in 1531.¹⁴

This map shows the regions in the Americas most familiar to Cabrillo: the Caribbean, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, northwestern Peru and California. Here he campaigned, resided, traded, and explored. Robert Dudley, *Carta prima Generale d'America dell'India Occidentale e Mare del Zur*. Florence: Francesco Onofri, 1646.

Courtesy La Jolla Map Museum

While doing a random online search for additional sources for the *Procurador* on the AGI website, I came across five or more documents mentioning criminal activity aboard the ship on which Cabrera was carrying gold to the Spanish Crown.¹⁵ The investigation on the ship concerned gold that he transported from Guatemala overland to Veracruz, Mexico and from there by ship to Seville, Spain.¹⁶ As the *Procurador*, Cabrera had been commissioned in 1531 by the Town Council of Santiago de Guatemala to journey to Spain with what was the first shipment of gold sent since initial conquest in 1524. That was the date of first contact between the Maya-Pipil of Mesoamerica and the European conquerors, led by the ambitious and relentless Spanish captain and military leader, Pedro de Alvarado.¹⁷

While reading the digitized documents about the case and the proceedings, along with the lists of eye witnesses and their questioning, I was surprised to learn that along with a few other residents of Guatemala, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was one of the passengers on the ship traveling to Spain. I knew from prior research on Cabrillo that he had gone to Spain around this time to marry Beatriz Sánchez de Ortega, but there was almost nothing else





Modern-day Palma del Río, in Southern Spain, birthplace of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo.

known about his journey to Spain.¹⁸ In addition to the other passengers and crew, Cabrillo was interrogated about the theft, and asked to testify in detail about the circumstances surrounding the initial trip overland from Guatemala to Veracruz, the exact items that were being transported by *Procurador* Cabrera, and all that had transpired on the ship regarding the robbery of the King's gold. This was only the first of many occasions on which Cabrillo and the others were sworn in and asked to bear witness about the theft on board the *San Juan*. The crime and its aftermath generated a wealth of information about the voyage of the *San Juan* and about the men who sailed from Veracruz, Mexico to Spain in 1531-1532.

This book reveals newly discovered sources that provide the evidence that Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was from the town of Palma del Río and fills in missing details about his participation in the conquest

This book reveals newly discovered sources that provide the evidence that Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was from the town of Palma del Río and fills in missing details about his participation in the conquest of the Indies and his activities in 1532 in Spain after the harrowing voyage on the *San Juan*.

of the Indies and his activities in 1532 in Spain after the harrowing voyage on the *San Juan*. In addition, it examines his business enterprises as ship owner and shipwright and his land grants and *encomienda* holdings in Guatemala through materials that have come to light in various archives in Seville, Guatemala, and New York City.

To better understand the historical importance of Cabrillo, a brief description is provided of his 1542 voyage of exploration to California, based on publications by several generations of Californian historians.

This present study is enriched by a lengthy appendix with facsimile images and transcriptions of documentary sources uncovered recently in archives in Spain and Guatemala. The time and expense involved in translating into English these complex sixteenth century primary sources would have been enormous and prone to translation and interpretation errors. Therefore, they are included here



Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas' history of the Americas under the first decades of Spanish rule is largely responsible for giving rise to the mistaken belief that Cabrillo was a native of Portugal. Why Herrera y Tordesillas chose to list Cabrillo as Portuguese remains a mystery. Recently discovered archival documents now unquestionably prove that his place of birth was the southern Spanish town of Palma de Micer Gilio - modern-day Palma del Río.

Capitulo III. Del viaje, que hizieron dos nauios, que embio don Antonio de Mendocca a descubrir la costa de la mar del Sur, desde nueva España.



Enos se descubrió una don Antonio de Mendocca de las cosas de la mar, porque no obstante, que los nauios, que auia embiado a descubrir la costa de nueva España, de la parte del Sur, auian padecido mucho, quería en todo caso saber lo que auia adelante, y para ello mandó apercibir dos nauios, y nombró por Capitan dellos a Juan Rodríguez Cabril-
to

2543

Juan Rodríguez Cabril-
to

lo Portugues, persona muy platica en las cosas de la mar. El vn nauio se nombró San Salvador, que era la Capitana, y el otro la Victoria; yua por Piloto mayor Bartolome Fernes, y tambien por Piloto Bartolome Fernes, y por Maclres Antonio Carrera, y S. Remo. Estando pues estos nauios a punto, salieron del puerto de Nauidad

in Spanish mainly for the keen student or researcher who wishes to peruse the original documentary evidence on which this publication is based. Also included are photographs of San Diego's monuments and museums that commemorate Cabrillo's landing, including images of the sea-worthy replica of his ship, the *San Salvador*, that is currently docked at the Maritime Museum in the San Diego harbor. Complimenting this sketch of the life of Cabrillo are images of Santiago de Guatemala, where he made his

home from 1524 until 1542, and of the town that he held in *encomienda*, Cobán. Coming full circle, also included are illustrations of Cabrillo's birthplace, the *Señorio* of Micer Egidio, the ancient and captivating town of Palma del Río, from which he set out at a young age to embark on an unknown and perilous enterprise that took him to Panama, Cuba, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, and finally to the Pacific coast of California.

Wendy Kramer, Ph.D.

Notes

- 1 Some portions of this text were previously published in the following journals: see Wendy Kramer, "Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, Citizen of Guatemala and Native of Palma del Río: New Sources from the Sixteenth Century," in *The Journal of San Diego History* 62 (3 & 4, Summer-Fall, 2016), 217-248. The same article was reprinted with some new images by the Maritime Museum of San Diego: see *Mains'l Haul: A Journal of Pacific Maritime History* 53 (1-4, 2017), 38-57.
- 2 "Micer Gilio" may be a Spanish corruption of the Italian name "Micer Egidio," midway between the Castilian "Gil" and Italian "Egidio." On September 2, 1342, King Alfonso XI granted power and dominion over the town of Palma to his Genoese admiral, Egidio Bocanegra, and the "villa de Palma" passed to the noble system and stayed in the Bocanegra-Portocarrero family for many centuries. Manuel Muñoz Rojo, *Historia y Devoción de un Pueblo: Palma del Río y la Virgen de Belén* (Palma del Río: Hermandad de Nuestra Señora de Belén de Palma del Río, 2007), 70-71.
- 3 See the three newspaper articles by Peter Rowe: "Cabrillo discovery rocking the boat," *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, September 15, 2015, A1, A7; "Cabrillo mystery may be solved," *Los Angeles Times*, September 17, 2015, B2; and "Scholar claims world is wrong about Cabrillo," *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, June 21, 2016, B1, B4. Spanish journalists were also interested in the story: see Pablo Ximénez de Sandoval, "España gana un conquistador," *El País*, October 10, 2015. Fernando Mexía at Spanish news agency *Agencia EFE* also covered the story, as did many other journalists in Andalucía.
- 4 For a discussion and critical reevaluation of the role of Pedro de Alvarado in the early conquest and settlement of Guatemala see, W. George Lovell, Christopher H. Lutz and Wendy Kramer, *Atemorizar la Tierra: Pedro de Alvarado y la Conquista de Guatemala, 1520-1541* (Guatemala: F&G Editores, 2016). In addition, an analysis of these events can be found in Lovell and Lutz with Kramer and William Swezey, "Strange Lands and Different Peoples: Spaniards and Indians in Colonial Guatemala (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013).
- 5 Wendy Kramer, *Encomienda Politics in Early Colonial Guatemala, 1524-1544: Dividing the Spoils* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 1. The encomienda was an institution designed to channel Indigenous labor and produce into Spanish hands after the conquest of an area. Charles Gibson described the encomienda as "a formal grant of designated Indian families, usually the inhabitants of a town or of a cluster of towns, entrusted to the charge of a Spanish colonist, who thus became the *encomendero*." Meanwhile, James Lockhart wrote that an "encomienda grant did not confer the right to own land, but went beyond the right to collect tributes, entitling the *encomendero* to deploy the Indians in mines or agricultural enterprises." See Charles Gibson, *Spain in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 49; and James Lockhart, *Spanish Peru, 1532-1560: A Colonial Society* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 11.
- 6 I use the shortened name "Cabrillo" to refer to Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo in this book, as it is the most common name used for him in English, in modern-day history books.
- 7 See Kelsey's comprehensive examination of the controversy over Cabrillo's Portuguese origin and the many attempts by several historians to get to the truth: Harry Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo* (San Marino, California: Huntington Library, 1986), 4-8, 178-179.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 5. See also Harry Kelsey and Iris Engstrand, "The Pathway to California: Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo and the Building of the *San Salvador*," *Mains'l Haul: A Journal of Pacific Maritime History* 15 (1 & 2, Winter-Spring, 2009), 37.



The only known portrait of the Spanish chronicler Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas (1549-1525/1526) is found on the title page of his *Descripción de las Indias* first published in 1601.

- 9 "Antes que [Francisco] Drake, sólo un insigne marino español, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, se había aventurado por tan altas latitudes en las costas occidentales de América, reconociendo las costas de California por comisión del Virrey de México D. Antonio de Mendoza, en cuyo honor llamó Mendocino al Cabo de este nombre." Manuel María de Peralta, *Costa-Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá en el siglo XVI; su historia y sus límites según los documentos del Archivo de Indias de Sevilla, del de Simancas, etc.* (Madrid: M. Murillo, 1883), 590, fn.1. Kelsey notes that there is as yet no proof that Cabrillo actually discovered and named Cape Mendocino; see *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 173.
- 10 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 6. Bernard Grunberg, "The Origins of the Conquistadores of Mexico City," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 74:2 (May, 1994), 271-272.
- 11 Carmelo Sáenz de Santa María and María del Carmen Deola de Girón, *Libro Viejo de la fundación de Guatemala* (Guatemala: Academia de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala, 1991), 45, 53.
- 12 Alvaro Gonzales, Portuguese, was recorded as being from the Kingdom of Portugal from a place called "Freixo de Espada à Cinta." AGI, Indiferente General 1801, Relación de la hacienda que tiene su majestad en la provincia de Guatemala con una relación de los bienes de difuntos, 1535.
- 13 I am one of the editors and paleographers of the two *Libros del Cabildo de Guatemala* (1530-1553) in the collection of the Hispanic Society of America (HSA) in New York City. Book two was published in June 2018 and book three is presently a manuscript in preparation: Wendy Kramer coordinator; Kramer and Jorge Luján Muñoz, editors, *Libro Segundo del Cabildo de la ciudad de Santiago de Guatemala* (Guatemala: Plumsock Mesoamerican Studies/CIRMA/AGH/UVG/HSA, 2018). For information about the Cabildo books and the circumstances surrounding their identification in 2010, see Wendy Kramer, W. George Lovell and Christopher H. Lutz, *Saqueo en el archivo: el paradero de los tesoros documentales guatemaltecos* (Antigua Guatemala: CIRMA; Guatemala: CEUR; Wellfleet, MA: PMS, 2014).
- 14 A *Procurador* is defined the following way: In certain historical periods, a person elected or chosen to represent different communities before the Courts. Real Academia Española (2001) *Diccionario de la lengua española* (22 ed.). See <http://www.rae.es>. It is important not to confuse the name of the *Procurador*, Cabrera, with the name Cabrillo! Furthermore, in my database Rodríguez Cabrillo is logically filed under R for Rodríguez rather than under C for Cabrillo.
- 15 The Crown was entitled to the "royal fifth" which meant that twenty percent of all metals mined in the Indies had to be shipped to them.
- 16 The actual port was located in San Juan de Ulúa, a small island facing Veracruz, and served as the port of entry for New Spain. Goods were carried to Veracruz by barge and small boats. For a thorough discussion of the two separate towns in the sixteenth century see Pablo E. Pérez-Mallaína, trans. Carla Rahn Phillips, *Spain's Men of the Sea: Daily Life on the Indies Fleets in the Sixteenth Century* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 11-12. To simplify the distinction between these two places, and in accordance with how it is often referred to in the sources, I have used the shorthand of "Veracruz" as the name of the port of embarkation.
- 17 Born in Badajoz, Spain in 1485, Alvarado participated in the conquests of Cuba, Mexico and Guatemala. He became the governor of Guatemala and enlisted the skills of Cabrillo in building ships.
- 18 See Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 55-58.

Timeline - Life of Juan Rodríguez

1497 1514 1518 1519 1520 1521 1521-1523 1524 1524-1526 1527 1528

1497
Approximate date of birth in Palma de Micer Gilio (Palma del Río), province of Córdoba, Spain.

1518
(?) Joins the forces of Pánfilo de Narváez in Cuba.

1514
Travels to Colombia and Panama from Seville, Spain with Pedro Arias de Ávila (Pedrarias Dávila).

1519
Hernán Cortés and his men land at Veracruz and begin the conquest of the Aztecs.

1520
Accompanies Narváez to Mexico. Cortés subdues Narváez's army and incorporates his men into one Spanish force and JRC becomes a corporal of crossbowmen and prepares pitch for caulking ships used in the conquest.

1521
Combined Spanish forces together with Tlaxcalan Indians and other Indigenous allies defeat Aztecs.

1521-1523
Serves under captain Francisco de Orozco in campaign against the Mixtecs of Oaxaca, and in Tututepeque, Chontales and Miges.

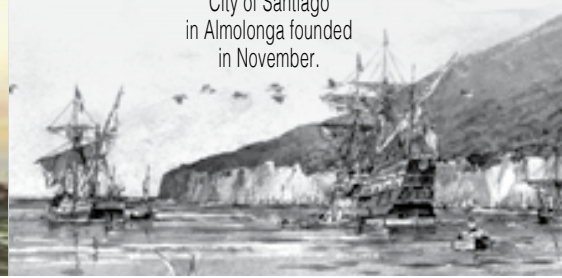
1524
Accompanies Captain Pedro de Alvarado, sent by Cortés, to conquer Guatemala.

1524
First phase of conquest of Guatemala complete. Spanish town of Santiago de Guatemala founded in Kaqchikel town of Iximché in July. JRC registers in August as a resident. *Encomiendas* given out by Alvarado.

1524-1526
Kaqchikel allies rebel, provoking a prolonged uprising. JRC and his future brother-in-law Diego Sánchez de Ortega (hereafter DSO) probably obtained *encomiendas* at this time.

1527
Jorge de Alvarado, brother of Pedro, takes over the conquest, arriving in Guatemala with thousands of Indigenous Mexican allies. City of Santiago founded in Almolonga founded in November.

1528
JRC registers again as resident in March. *Encomiendas* distributed by Jorge de Alvarado. In April, JRC and DSO also receive agricultural lands near Santiago.



1538 1539 1540 1541 1542

1538
January, Cabrillo's ship *San Salvador* sails to Peru with horses and goods to sell. On January 9, JRC signs partnership agreement to transport horses to Peru. January 17, names Juan Cansino as master of his ship the *San Juan*.

1538
March 24, tribute assessment of Xicalapa, *encomienda* town of JRC.

1539
November 18, Governor Alvarado mentions in a letter the construction of his armada and its imminent departure.

1539
Francisco de Ulloa proves that California is a peninsula and not an island by sailing to the northern headwaters of the Gulf.

1540
March 31, JRC receives *encomienda* grant of Cobán and Jocopila after death of his brother-in-law.

1540
May, Alvarado ready to depart Guatemala for the port of Acajutla in El Salvador and orders the hanging of the imprisoned Kaqchikel leaders.

1540
September, fleet sets sail for Mexico.

1540
December, fleet sails north to port of Colima, Mexico. JRC receives *encomienda* grant from Alvarado for Jumaytepeque and Tacuba.

1541
Fleet sails to Barra de Navidad, Mexico where they are to depart. Alvarado dies in July as a result of wounds in the Mixton War.

1541
August 29, JRC present in town council meeting in Guatemala; reading of Viceroy Mendoza's letter relaying Alvarado's death.

1541
September 10-11, Santiago de Guatemala is destroyed by mudslides and floods. Hundreds of people are killed including the widow of Alvarado, the female governor of the province.

1542
Cabrillo divides leadership of the fleet with Ruy López de Villalobos who takes over ten of the vessels for the Philippines. Cabrillo commands three: the *San Salvador*, *La Victoria*, and *San Miguel*.

1542
June 27, Cabrillo's fleet leaves for the north in search of a shorter route to China, nearly two years after they first set sail.

1542
July 6, Cabo San Lucas (San José del Cabo)



Cabrillo (JRC)-c. 1497-1543



1529 1530 1531 1532 1533 1534 1534-1535 1536-1540 1536 1537

1529

JRC, DSO and Sancho Barahona find gold near to their shared *encomienda* of Cobán, in present-day Alta Verapaz. JRC appears as a witness to a town council meeting in May and in October DSO petitions for a license to mine for gold.

1530

Pedro de Alvarado returns to Guatemala from Spain and the Kaqchikel lords, Cahí Ymox and Belehé Qat, surrender to him. Construction of the city begins.

1531

July-August, JRC leaves Guatemala for Vera Cruz to catch a ship back to Spain, carrying 1,500 gold pesos. He accompanies the legal representative of the city *Procurador* Gabriel de Cabrera, who is carrying a shipment of Guatemalan gold for the Crown.

1531

They set sail on the *San Juan* in October. In November there is a theft of the Crown's gold, which is detected and prosecuted while the ship is docked in Havana, Cuba. Suspects tortured. JRC and other passengers asked to give testimony.

1532

The *San Juan* reaches Santa Cruz, Tenerife in the Canary Islands in January. Criminal case continues.

1532

Ship then sails for Cádiz, Spain arriving in February. In sworn statements JRC testifies that he is from Palma de Micer Gilio (Palma del Río) and some thirty-five years old (February 12 and 22).

1532

On March 13, JRC gives power of attorney to his future father-in-law, Alonso Sánchez de Ortega. In April or May he marries Beatriz Sánchez de Ortega and refers to himself as a "squire" and a "merchant" in documents in Spain.

1532

On May 24, JRC receives land grant in the Tianguecillo and other favors from the Crown in recognition of his services. On August 5, he borrows money and grants a power of attorney to an Italian merchant.

1533

JRC returns to Central America, arriving in March at Puerto Fonseca in Nicaragua to meet up with governor Alvarado who has been building an armada to travel to Peru.

1534

On January 11, JRC and a "Juan Rodríguez Portuguese" are both on the muster list as horsemen accompanying the governor to Peru. Alvarado soon forced to return to Guatemala after striking a deal in August with Francisco Pizarro and Diego de Almagro.

1534-1535

JRC builds a ship, the *Santiago*, at Acajutla (El Salvador), and prepares it to travel to Peru with horses to sell. Alvarado seizes the ship and JRC loses his revenue. JRC gives testimony in Guatemala on March 12, 1535, for Gabriel de Cabrera.

1536-1540

Oversees construction of more than seven vessels for Alvarado and Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza. Thirteen vessels in total make up the fleet.

1537

On January 31, testifies in Governor Alvarado's judicial review, in Guatemala.

1536

Alvarado leaves in February for Honduras, JRC probably accompanies him. Government of Honduras handed over to Alvarado.

1536

In May, JRC registers as a resident of Gracias a Dios and receives *encomiendas* on July 20. JRC also named chief magistrate (*justicia mayor*) of the port.

1543

1542

July 13, Magdalena Bay

1542

August 5, Cedros Island

1542

September 8, Santa María (San Quintín)

1542

September 17, San Mateo (Ensenada)

1542

September 27, Islas Desiertas (Coronado Islands)

1542

September 28, San Miguel (San Diego)

1542

October 7, San Salvador (Santa Catalina)

1542

October 8, Bahía de los Fumos (San Pedro)

1542

October 18, Cabo de Galera (Point Concepción)

1542

October 18, San Lucas (San Miguel Island)

1542

November 17, Cabo de los Pinos (Monterey Bay)

1542

November-December, wintered on *La Capitana* (probably Catalina)

1542

December 23, members of the Spanish fleet in a skirmish with local Indigenous people and JRC goes to their aid. It has been reported that he splintered a shinbone, broke his leg, or perhaps broke his arm.

1543

January 3, JRC dies from his injuries. Buried on *La Capitana*. He left behind his widow, Beatriz Sánchez Ortega, sons Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo de Medrano and Diego Sánchez Ortega, plus three daughters by his first domestic partner, an Indigenous woman.

1543

January 19, remaining members of the fleet departed *La Capitana* and sailed to the north, but stormy weather prevented any progress.

1543

February 22, they made a turn toward the coast and continued northward.

1543

February 28, then they turned south after perhaps reaching a latitude of 43° or 44°.

1543

April 14, returned to Navidad after failing to reach the Spice Islands and losing their captain. After his death the family of JRC in Guatemala spent many years in litigation over his estate.



Chapter 1

Journey to Spain and Robbery on Board the *San Juan*



Gold bars recovered from the site of the 1554 Spanish shipwrecks at Padre Island on the Texas Gulf Coast. We now know a great deal more about Cabrillo's origins thanks, in part, to investigations related to the theft of gold on board the *San Juan* in 1531.

Sources recently discovered address some of the omissions in the historiography of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, particularly from the period of the 1530s. This chapter examines the circumstances surrounding the criminal investigation that generated new information on Cabrillo and provided the name of his place of birth, “la villa de Palma de Micer Gilio,” today known as Palma del Río, in Spain’s southern region of Andalucía.

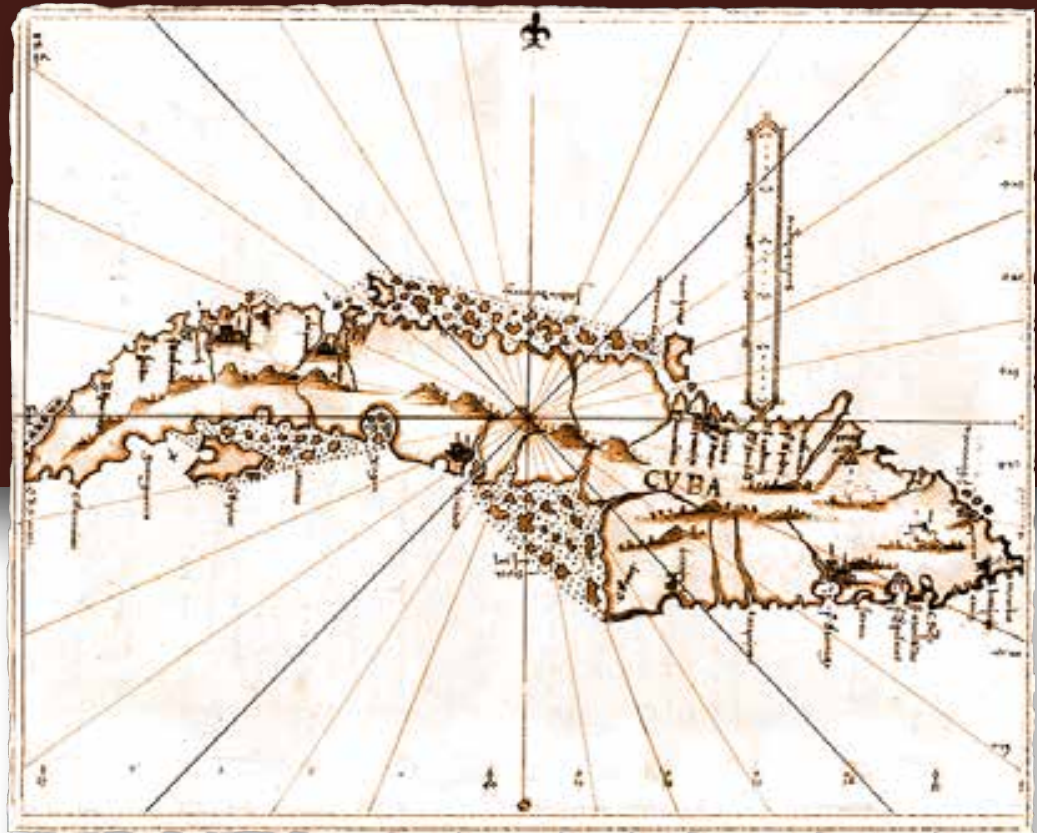
Cabrillo’s journey to Seville, Spain, in the early 1530s to marry Beatriz Sánchez de Ortega is alluded to in several documents, but little documentation had been located about his activities while in Seville.¹ The documents discussed here give details after Cabrillo left Guatemala in the summer of 1531 to seek the first available ship to Spain, departing from the port of

Veracruz. According to his own testimony, Cabrillo and his traveling companions reached the port sometime around October, and the only ship that was ready to sail was the *San Juan*, captained by the shipmaster Blas Gallego.²

The investigation commenced in November 1531 in the first port of call, Havana, and concerned the theft of gold bars that the *Procurador* of Guatemala was transporting to Spain to deliver to the Spanish Crown, as the Crown’s share of this first shipment of gold from Guatemala since the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors.³ Throughout the protracted legal proceedings in the ports of Tenerife, Cádiz, and Seville, Cabrillo and fellow passengers from Guatemala, as well as sailors and crew, were asked to testify on numerous occasions. Like the other witnesses, Cabrillo was sworn in and answered

The island of Cuba from Alonso de Santa Cruz's *Islario*, completed around 1560. The *San Juan*, carrying Cabrillo on a return voyage to Spain, arrived here in November 1531.

Courtesy Biblioteca Nacional de España



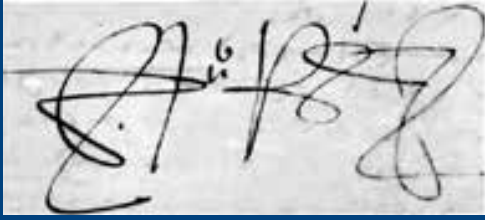
all questions under oath while the official scribes dutifully recorded his responses verbatim. Three documents in particular provide five separate examples of Cabrillo's

testimony, in which it was recorded that his full name was Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo and that he was a native of Palma de Micer Gilio. Cabrillo gave testimony elsewhere in the same case, and also in a power of

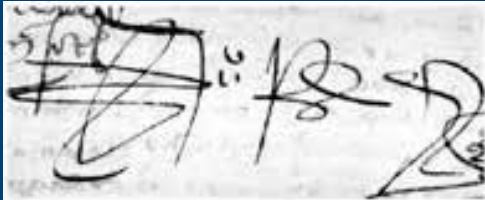
attorney, under the names: "Juan Rodríguez," "Juan Rodríguez, merchant (*mercader*)," and "Juan Rodríguez, squire (*escudero*)." There are at least nine statements from him within these official documents.



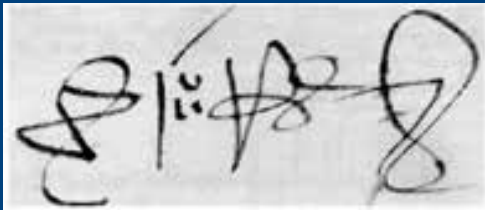
The port of Veracruz on the east coast of New Spain played a crucial role in the story of the conquest of Mexico. Here Cortés disembarked his forces, scuttled his fleet, and met Montezuma's ambassadors. In 1532 Cabrillo would depart from this port bound for his homeland, Spain. Mid-nineteenth-century copy of an original 1592 sketch of the port of Veracruz and the fortress of San Juan de Ulúa by Baltazar Vellerino de Villalobos published in his *Luz de navegantes*.



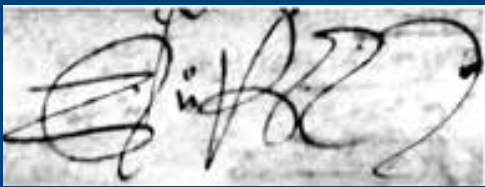
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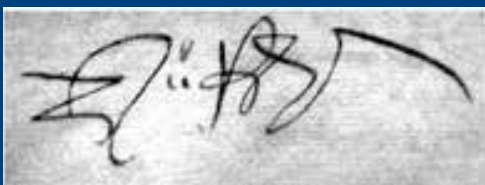
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5

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo's signatures from documents dating from the 1530s. [1] AHPS, Protocolos. Sig. 42-P. Poder a Antonio de Luisi, 1532. [2] AHPS, Protocolos. Sig. 42-P. Deuda a Antonio de Luisi, 1532. [3] AHPS, Protocolos. Sig. 6685-P. Poder a Alonso Sánchez Ortega, 1532. [4] AGCA, A1.20, Leg. 737, Compañía de Cabrillo y Pedro Hernández Picón, 1538. [5] AGCA, A1.20, Poder a Juan Cansino para maestre del navío San Juan, 1538. Archival images extracted and designed by Mayda Gutiérrez Rodríguez.

Documents conserved in the Archivo Histórico Provincial de Sevilla (AHPS) and the Archivo General de Centro America (AGCA).

In addition to Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo and *Procurador* Gabriel de Cabrera, the following citizens of Guatemala also traveled to Spain from Veracruz on the *San Juan*: Juan Ortega (from Madrigal and a servant of the Governor of Guatemala); Eugenio de Moscoso (from Ciudad Real) and his servant Juan Borgoñon (from Burgundy); and Diego Sánchez de Santiago (from Jerez de la Frontera).⁴ These men were called upon to give testimony several times as the case dragged on in numerous ports of call, then in Spain and finally back in Guatemala.

The group of men from Guatemala had travelled overland to Mexico, crossing rivers and rough roads for more than 200 leagues. While they were waiting for the ship to depart from Veracruz, Cabrillo and Cabrera spent several days together buying provisions for the journey. Cabrera had with him two large boxes containing gold samples for the Crown as well as another box with his own gold and precious items.

Some of the crewmembers were no doubt rough types, and the Procurador described them as “sons of many mothers” (hijos de muchas madres).

In addition, he was carrying formal documents and letters from Spanish citizens, the Royal Officials and the Town Council (*Cabildo*) of the city of Santiago de Guatemala.

Testimony in the case reveals that Cabrillo was in charge of safeguarding a suitcase with official papers and jewels for Cabrera while they were on board the *San Juan*. Cabrillo testified that he had met Cabrera twelve to thirteen years before, in Cuba, and although Cabrillo did not share quarters on the ship nor eat his meals with him (like the other resident of Guatemala, Eugenio de Moscoso), it was obvious that they had a cordial relationship and a bond of trust. In his testimony, Cabrillo noted that *Procurador* Cabrera and Moscoso were travelling together on the ship as partners.⁵

Cabrillo and others testified that the boxes laden with the Crown's gold were tied up and sewn, using native cloth and wrapped in deerskin and with floating devices attached to them so that if the ship capsized the contents might survive. Interestingly, Cabrera brought on board a so-called “tiger” for whose freight he paid ten pesos. History has not revealed the fate of this Central American feline, likely a jaguar, but it must have been one of the first New World wild

cats trapped and transported to exhibit in Spain.⁶

Some of the crewmembers were no doubt rough types, and the *Procurador* described them as “sons of many mothers” (*bijos de muchas madres*). He had an altercation with the boatswain, Pedro de Ochoa, a few days after they set sail from Veracruz, because *Procurador* Cabrera was not satisfied with the location where Ochoa had stored the two boxes containing the Crown’s gold. Later, as the case became more complicated after their arrival in Spain and the intervention of the officials from the House of Trade of the Indies (*La Casa de Contratación de las Indias*), *Procurador* Cabrera had to defend himself from accusations that he had not properly supervised the items for which he was responsible, and that he had taken much better care of his own valuables. He defended his actions by stating that he was at the mercy of the ship’s crew, and that initially he had no reason to suspect any malfeasance on their part. Furthermore, he was practically unconscious from seasickness during much of the voyage.⁷

The theft was discovered shortly after the ship docked in San Cristóbal de la Havana. Cabrillo testified that while he was on shore, someone notified him of the news that one of the boxes had been broken open and its contents removed.⁸ Seven bars of gold belonging to

the Crown, totaling 1,000 pesos in value, had gone missing. By November 9, 1531, “the law was aboard the ship,” and a senior officer from the island of Cuba began an investigation into the theft. The authorities opened and searched all boxes, and passengers and crew gave testimony about what they had seen and heard. The accused ringleader was the boatswain, Pedro de Ochoa; it was well known on the ship that he had previously been suspected of theft and of having “bad hands” (*malas manos*).⁹



Above Left and Right: A ship’s captain and helmsman from the late 1520s. Christoph Weiditz, *Trachtenbuch*.

Courtesy Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg

Spanish sailors from the late 1520s depicted by Christoph Weiditz in his *Trachtenbuch*.

Courtesy Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg





The process of extracting confessions in the sixteenth century may well seem extreme to modern sensibilities. The Spaniards were not unique in using enhanced techniques of interrogation as part of their judicial proceedings. Joos de Damhouder's *Praxis rerum criminalium* published in 1554, was widely consulted and applied throughout Europe. This illustration shows a procedure described in Damhouder's work as the "water cure." The technique was employed unsuccessfully by Spanish authorities in an attempt to find the thief on board the *San Juan* in late 1531.

used a form of torture referred to as "fire torture." Investigators whipped another crewmate to force a statement. The suspected crewmembers were then imprisoned on board the ship with orders to deliver them to officials at the House of Trade in Seville.¹⁰

The *San Juan* continued its journey, next docking in mid-January 1532 at the port of Santa Cruz in the Canary Islands. The sails were lowered and removed, and placed on land by order of the municipal officer of Santa Cruz while a further investigation took place. *Procurador* Cabrera asked the judges of the Appellate Court

There was detailed eyewitness testimony about the sequence of events surrounding the theft, which had allegedly been committed by several individuals late at night by candlelight. Heated discussions between the implicated crew members was overheard and cited verbatim, with statements such as "be quiet for the love of God, don't tell anyone" and "if he didn't keep quiet he would have to kill him." In a procedure that may have been similar to modern-day water boarding, Ochoa was strung up and tortured. Twenty pitchers of water were poured down his throat in an effort to extract a confession. When none was forthcoming, they

of the Canary Islands to intervene, and the prisoners were taken ashore and jailed.

Cabrillo and the other passengers and crew were undoubtedly exhausted by the protracted voyage, and the expenses incurred continued to mount with the long delay. While docked in Tenerife, Cabrillo borrowed money from one of the crew, Juanes Celain, to purchase provisions. As security for the loan, Cabrillo gave him a small gold bar.¹¹

The master and part-owner of the ship, Blas Gallego, successfully convinced the judges in Tenerife that he had a duty to take the ship with its gold, merchandise and crew to Seville, and present the criminal case to the

House of Trade, since Tenerife did not have the requisite jurisdiction. Considering that winter was upon them, and with further delay bad weather and seasonal storms could put the ship and its passengers at risk, the authorities allowed the ship to set sail.

The *San Juan* reached Cádiz at the beginning of February 1532, and immediately constables (*alguaciles*) came on board and took the prisoners to the public jail. At this point officials from the House of Trade in Cádiz took over the criminal investigation. All passengers and crew were detained and not allowed to leave the ship “on punishment of death and loss of their property,” until the judges permitted them to disembark one by one, but without their belongings. Each person was

A chart of the Canary Islands under the sign of Cancer, drafted by the Italian cartographer Leonardo Torriani in the 1580s. Half-a-century earlier Cabrillo and his fellow voyagers on board the *San Juan* would be forced to remain at port in Santa Cruz while investigations were carried out in the wake of theft on board the galleon.

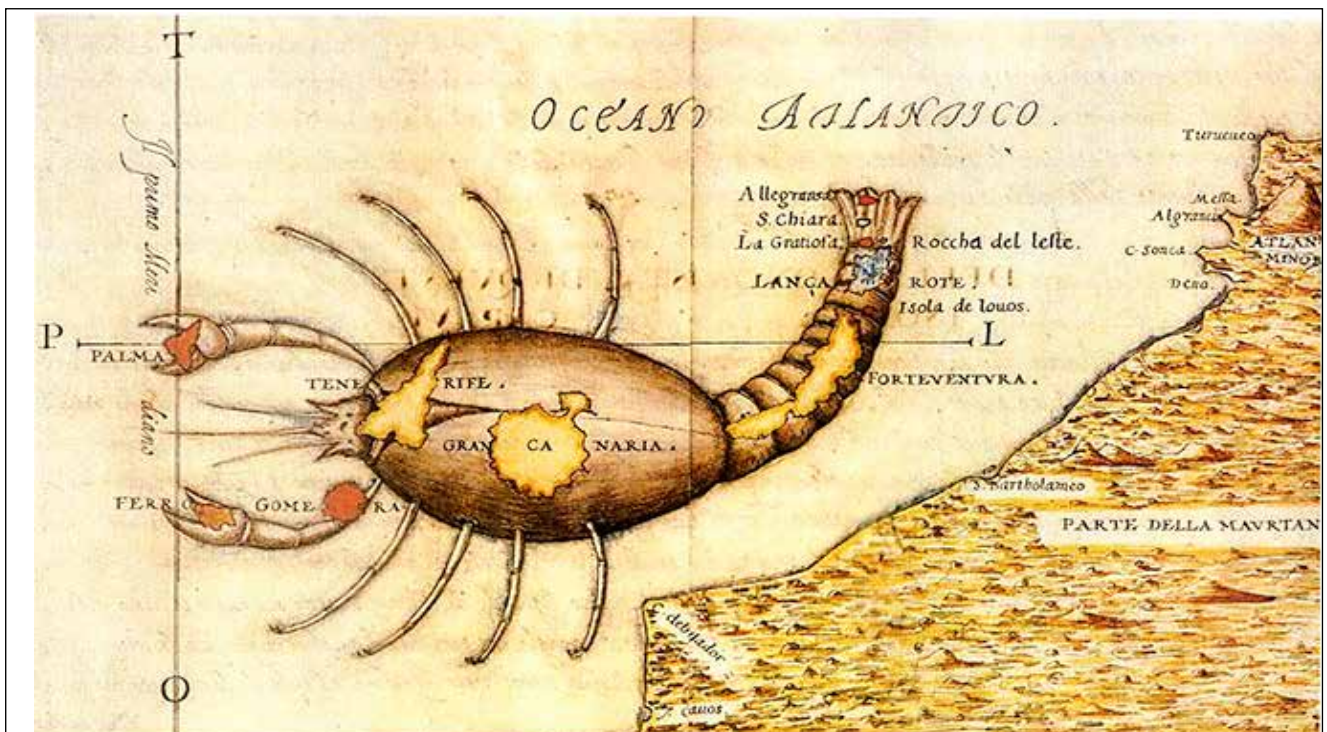
searched before leaving the ship and ordered to give testimony about the case. The master of the ship, Blas Gallego, was taken off to jail.¹²

Cabrillo had given his first deposition in Havana on November 9, 1531, during which he stated his name, “Juan Rodríguez,” and what he had observed on the ship. On February 12, 1532 in Cádiz, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, Eugenio de Moscoso, and Juan de Ortega were asked to state where they were from and where they were born. The interrogation included a detailed list of questions about the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of

the gold. “Then, their Lordships the Judges ordered that a man named Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, a native of Palma de Micer Gilio, be brought before them, and they took and received his sworn statement pursuant to the law, and asked him the following questions.”¹³

Procurador Cabrera asked a similar list of questions to some of the same witnesses from Guatemala later in February and the answers were compiled in an affidavit that served as a record or a perpetual memory of the matter.¹⁴ Once again, Cabrillo, Eugenio de Moscoso,

Cabrillo had given his first deposition in Havana on November 9, 1531, during which he stated his name, “Juan Rodríguez,” and what he had observed on the ship.





Diego Sánchez de Santiago, and others stated where they were born and where they currently resided. Cabrillo was the first witness: “Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, a native of Palma de Micer Gilio, said that he can answer the said question and what is stated in it because he saw it with his own eyes and because this witness himself came from Guatemala, from the said province and he knows this to be the truth.”¹⁵

The testimony presented in these criminal proceedings is lengthy and complex; some lists contain more than thirty questions. A second inquiry in Cádiz led to an affidavit that was similar but not identical to the one above. It is dated February 22, and Cabrillo’s

Above: Throughout the sixteenth century the port-city of Seville in Southern Spain was one of Europe’s most vibrant commercial centers. Cabrillo visited the city in 1532 to both secure financial backing for his New World ventures and also court his future wife. This view of the port painted some decades later by Alonso Sánchez Coello illustrates the crucial role of maritime activity in the life of the city.

Courtesy Museo de América, Madrid

After a long and tedious voyage, Cabrillo finally arrived at the port of Cádiz on the coast of Southern Spain. Shown here is a view of the city from later in the century published in the *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* by Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg.



testimony reads as follows: “Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, a native of Palma de Micer Gilio, gave a sworn statement according to the law, and when asked the first question, said that he knew each of the people mentioned in the question and that he knew about the said ship because he had traveled in it from Veracruz in New Spain to this city [Cádiz] and that he knew of the two cases with gold belonging to the Crown and that he, the witness testifying, was thirty-five years old...”¹⁶ Cabrillo did not consistently record his age as thirty-five; elsewhere, he testified that he was about thirty years old. This lack of precision about one’s age was not unusual at that time.¹⁷

Cabrillo’s Activities in Spain

In February 1532, though still involved as a witness in the ongoing and arduous legal investigation in Cádiz, Cabrillo engaged in his own pressing pursuits during what was intended to be a short stay in Spain. Foremost in his mind was the return of the piece of gold that he had given to Juanes de Celain as security for repayment of the loan that he had taken. On February 22, Cabrillo made a formal demand for

the return of his gold, pledging to repay the loan as agreed. The demand was registered as follows:

In the right noble and loyal City of Cádiz on this Thursday, the twenty-second of February ... in the year one thousand five hundred and thirty-two, before the noble gentleman, Licenciante Juan Perez lieutenant judge at the House of Trade of the Indies ... who is now present and who resides in this City of Cádiz, and in the presence of myself, Alonso de Medina, one of the registered public scribes of this city, and a scribe to Their Majesties, and the undersigned witnesses; the witness Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, who said that he was a native of Palma de Micer Gilio, appeared before us and said that he had

given a bar of gold of nineteen karats as security to Juanes de Celain, a sailor who was on the ship belonging to Blas Gallego, a resident of Seville who was returning from the Indies of New Spain ... and that he wants to pay to the said Juanes de Celain what he owes him for this [loan] for the said bar of gold.¹⁸

The process was more time-consuming than anticipated because Celain, who was part owner of the

Cabrillo did not consistently record his age as thirty-five; elsewhere, he testified that he was about thirty years old. This lack of precision about one’s age was not unusual at that time.¹⁷





Modern-day Seville, capital of the southern Spanish region of Andalucía.

ship, was terminally ill and bedridden in a house “next to the fort” in the city of Cádiz.¹⁹ The public scribe went to his bedside to inform him of the pending case, and Celain stated that because of his illness he had given the bar of gold and other items to the ship’s master, Blas Gallego, for safekeeping. Later, a witness said that Juanes de Celain had died of extreme drowsiness (*modorra*).²⁰ Meanwhile, Gallego, who had been taken prisoner in Cádiz and was detained for questioning, testified that he had given his own gold and that of Cabrillo, as well as items of value pledged by passengers and sailors, to another man, Rodrigo Álvarez, with instructions to carry it all to Seville to the House of Trade. Cabrillo requested a sworn, public statement of all that had been stated, as proof and testimony of the truth of the matter, which was signed by the Licenciado Judge and the registered public scribe in Cádiz.

Cabrillo appointed Alonso Sánchez de Ortega as his legal representative.²¹ Sánchez de Ortega, a merchant and citizen of Seville from the parish of Santa María (Collación de Santa María), was Cabrillo’s future father-in-law.

Ortega. Although the documentary source in the AGI contains a certified copy of the power of attorney, we were able to locate the original, which is housed in the Provincial Historic Archive of Seville (*Archivo Histórico*

Provincial de Sevilla, hereafter, the AHPS), and contains one of the few examples of Cabrillo’s signature. A total of three documents signed by Cabrillo in 1532 have been located among the books of notaries Luis Enero and Alonso de la Barrera at the AHPS.²²

Although the power of attorney used only the name “Juan Rodríguez,” it is without equivocation Cabrillo because he appointed his future father-in-law as attorney, and the matter for which he appointed him was the collection of his gold, the return of which was requested in a deposition in the name of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, native of Palma de Micer Gilio. Both the statement in the name of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo and

This series of events generated an unexpected wealth of documentary evidence about Cabrillo and his affairs. Left with no other recourse to retrieve his piece of pledged gold, Cabrillo headed to Seville from Cádiz and on Wednesday March 13, 1532, he executed a power of attorney on “the Street of the Steps” (*La Calle de las Gradass*) near the cathedral in front of the public scribe and other scribes who served as witnesses. Cabrillo appointed Alonso Sánchez de Ortega as his legal representative.²¹ Sánchez de Ortega, a merchant and citizen of Seville from the parish of Santa María (*Collación de Santa María*), was Cabrillo’s future father-in-law. He was also the father of Cabrillo’s business partner in Guatemala, Diego Sánchez de

the power of attorney in the name of Juan Rodríguez are part of the same file of documents at the AGI.

For a transaction as important as this, Cabrillo needed a person in whom he could place the utmost trust. The power of attorney stated that Alonso Sánchez de Ortega was authorized to pay Cabrillo's debt on his behalf in return for the bar of gold weighing forty-three gold pesos, and that he should retrieve it from either Blas Gallego, the ship's master, or from the House of Trade in Seville. This document provides additional information about the family of Cabrillo's wife, Beatriz Sánchez de Ortega, their place of residence, and the likely parish in which

Juan and Beatriz married, *la Collación de Santa María*, which corresponds today to the parish of El Sagrario, the main Cathedral in Seville.²³

In addition, Sánchez de Ortega was required by the House of Trade to show proof that Cabrillo had properly registered his gold when he boarded the ship in Veracruz. On March 22, 1532, the following proof of registration was presented:

I, Juan de Huguibar, a scribe of their Caesarean Catholic Majesties, and their notary public at their court and in all of their kingdoms and domains, and an officer of the

archives of the House of Trade of the Indies, which is located in this very noble and loyal city of Seville, on behalf of the right noble gentleman Juan López de Recalde, an accountant of that institution on behalf of Their Majesties, hereby state and swear to any man who may see this document, that in the archives where a record is kept of all of the lots of gold and other valuable items brought from the Indies in this year of one thousand five hundred and thirty-two, on board the ship known as the *San Juan*, which voyaged under ship master Blas Gallego, the following information is recorded:

Registration for Juan Rodríguez, who has in his possession one thousand five hundred gold pesos, which are transported at his own risk, and it is signed Juan Rodríguez. 1500 pesos

In the margin of the aforementioned record the following note is written: Carried by Juan Rodríguez.²⁴

This documentary material provides unanticipated information about Cabrillo's potential wealth at that time. Certainly, with his partner Diego Sánchez de Ortega, their mines and lucrative *encomiendas* had brought them somewhere between 500 and 700 *pesos*

de minas a year, which was a huge sum and made them both wealthy men.²⁵ We now know that he was rich enough to carry 1,500 pesos in gold to spend in Spain for his marriage and business enterprises with his new father-in-law.²⁶ Shortly after receiving proof that the gold was properly registered, on March 27, 1532, the formalities were concluded and Sánchez de Ortega paid the outstanding debt and collected the small gold bar in his future son-in-law's name. Cabrillo may not have been present because he was giving testimony, again, for the hapless Guatemalan *Procurador* Cabrera, who was appealing an order by the House of Trade in Seville for items of gold and jewels that they had embargoed, alleging that Cabrera, unlike some of the other passengers, had not properly registered them in Mexico.

Cabrillo stated, in testimony dated in Seville at the beginning of March 1532, that he was "Juan Rodríguez, squire (*escudero*)."²⁷ The purpose of the testimony



Above: A woman of the city of Seville, from the *Trachtenbuch* of the travelling artist Christoph Weiditz, sketched in the late 1520s. Cabrillo's fiancée, Beatriz Sánchez de Ortega would have worn clothing of this style.

Courtesy Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg



Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo and Beatriz Sánchez de Ortega were probably married in the Iglesia del Sagrario - now Seville's cathedral, in April 1532.

Guatemala, which seemed to be the purpose of the proceedings. Cabrillo declared again that he had known Cabrera for over twelve years, the two men had both served in Cuba, and that he was a conquistador of Guatemala and had been there for more than eight years, which would place him there precisely at the time of the first conquering expedition led by Pedro de Alvarado in 1524.²⁹ In addition, Cabrillo stated that he personally saw the ships that were built by Pedro de Alvarado, and that when he left Guatemala for Spain, Alvarado was building more. This testimony from Juan

was to bolster the *Procurador's* contention that he was trustworthy and held in great esteem in Guatemala by its Governor, Pedro de Alvarado, and the Town Council of Santiago de Guatemala. Perhaps for this reason Juan Rodríguez did not use the "merchant" label that he gave himself shortly afterwards in the power of attorney, or the "Cabrillo" surname that he used a week before in Cádiz when he was desperate to get his gold back. As circumstances changed, he might have sought to elevate his status somewhat socially, and to lend credibility to himself as a witness for *Procurador* Cabrera by highlighting his military status.²⁸

Cabrillo did not mention his birthplace in this testimony, but neither did the other witness from Guatemala, Eugenio de Moscoso, so evidently this was not one of the questions put to them by the scribe. They both stated, however, that they were residents of Santiago de

Rodríguez "squire" lines up perfectly with testimony by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo in other documents.

It is likely that after these depositions, in April 1532 Cabrillo and Beatriz Sánchez de Ortega were married, which was the principal motive for Cabrillo's presence in Seville at that time.³⁰ Beginning in early May, there is evidence of renewed activity with a positive outcome for Cabrillo: there were five royal decrees signed by Crown officials addressed

A sixteenth-century woodcut depicting a Spanish wedding.



to the authorities in Guatemala, in which favors and exemptions were granted to a “Juan Rodríguez de Palma,” resident of Guatemala. Cabrillo therefore had another name by which he was identified in Spain, Juan Rodríguez from Palma. These decrees stated that Juan Rodríguez de Palma was currently in Seville, had just married, and was returning to Guatemala with his new wife. Two royal decrees were issued on May 9, 1532. In the first one, Cabrillo was granted a license to take back six pounds of engraved silver for his personal use.³¹ The second one was an exemption from the *almojarifazgo*, a tariff that was normally charged for goods going back and forth to the Indies. This particular document provided more information about his services to the Crown:

Juan Rodríguez de Palma, a resident of the city of Santiago that is located in the said province [of Guatemala], told me that it has been more than eighteen years [in 1514] since he came to these lands in the Armada of Pedrarias de Ávila, our Governor of Tierra Firme, and that he then served us on the Island of Cuba and found himself involved in the discovery and conquest of New Spain, and went there to populate the province [of Guatemala], and because he has now married and is taking his wife to that land with a view to remaining there ... I am granting him this royal favor ...³²

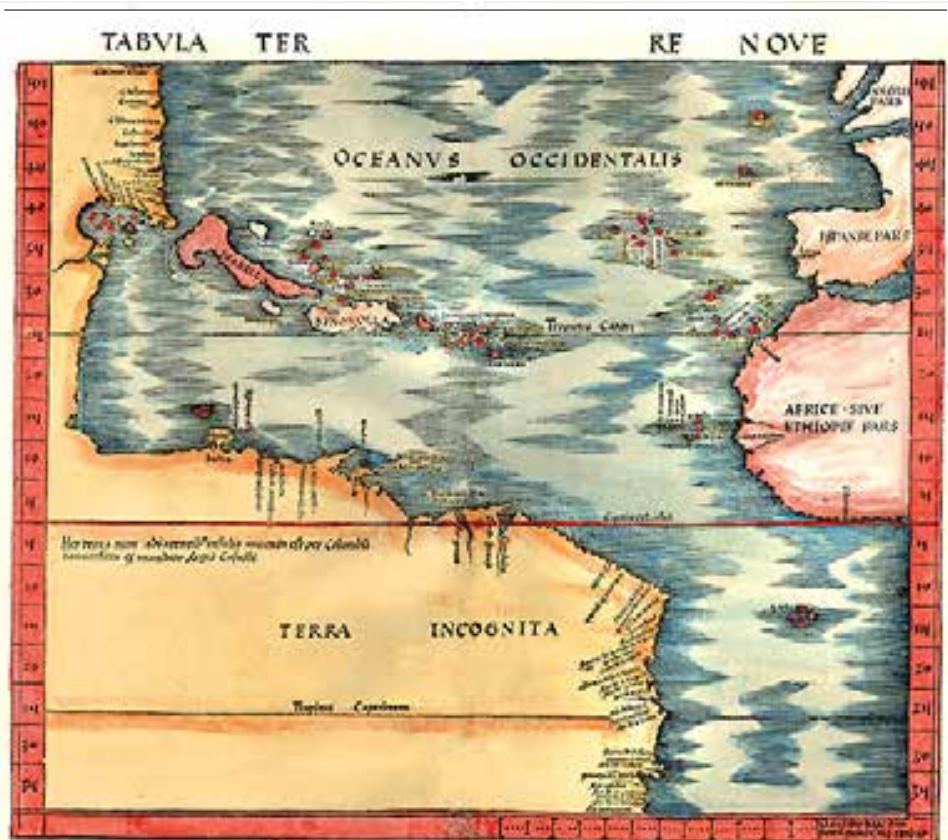
The Atlantic or “Western Ocean” (*Oceanus occidentalis*) envisaged at the time Cabrillo began his New World adventure. Martin Waldseemüller’s 1513 edition of Ptolemy’s *Geographia*.



Left: Pedrarias de Ávila, commander of the 1514 armada in which a young Spaniard - Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo - set sail from Spain bound for the Americas.

The Crown dispatched another round of decrees on May 24. In three separate documents, Juan Rodríguez de Palma was again granted exemption on the *almojarifazgo*, the information about his military career was repeated, and he was given a license to take two black slaves back to Guatemala, one male and one female: “you have leave to take and transport to our Indies and islands and Tierra Firme across the Sea one black male slave and one black female slave for your personal service and to serve in your household.”³³ The third decree was a concession for a piece of land in Guatemala, in the valley of Tianguacillo.

Among the many items drawn up on May 24 in Medina del Campo and signed by the Queen, there were also three in the name of “Juana Rodríguez.” According to these decrees, Juan Rodríguez de Palma intended to take his cousin, Juana Rodríguez, a resident of Seville, back to



This chart of the Atlantic Ocean, most likely drafted by the Portuguese cartographer Pedro Reinel in 1535, depicts the island of Cuba, the Canary Islands, and Southern Spain: all places visited by Cabrillo on his 1531-1532 voyage home from Guatemala.

Guatemala to marry Diego Sánchez, no doubt referring to Cabrillo's brother-in-law.³⁴ In the decrees granted to Juana Rodríguez, in addition to an exemption from the *almojarifazgo* tariff and a license to take three pounds of engraved silver for her personal use, there was the following document regarding a land grant:

Juana Rodríguez, a resident of the city of Seville, told me that her cousin, Juan Rodríguez de Palma, was taking her to that province to marry a certain Diego Sánchez of Seville, who resides in that province, and because she is traveling for that reason ... she petitioned me and requested, by my leave, that I be so kind as to list in that decree the grant of another parcel of land like the one that is to be given to the said Juan Rodríguez.³⁵

Unfortunately, these decrees are the only record of cousin Juana Rodríguez; it is possible she perished on the voyage to Guatemala or shortly after, or changed her mind about the marriage and remained in Spain or elsewhere in the Indies. At the time of his death in 1540, Diego Sánchez was not married and had no legitimate offspring, and his brother-in-law, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, inherited his *encomienda* in Guatemala.³⁶

Over the next few months Cabrillo would have gathered supplies for his household and for his shipbuilding enterprise, and prepared for his return to Guatemala. He incurred a debt of 700 *pesos de oro*



with two men in Seville for tools that he purchased, and years later, according to a 1551 document housed in the Provincial Historic Archive of Seville (AHPS), they sought to get his heirs to repay the amount still owing.³⁷ There is another original record, also housed in the AHPS: a signed power of attorney dated August 5, 1532, in which Cabrillo named as his representative an Italian merchant, Antonio de Luisi from Perugia, to convey and transport to New Spain all the engraved silver and the black slaves that the Crown had granted in accordance with the two royal decrees. Power of attorney was also given to Luisi to collect all monies owed to Cabrillo and to provide receipts in his name for the return. He also gave him authority to settle any of his disputes in front of justices of all jurisdictions, and as a guarantee, Cabrillo committed all his worldly goods to Luisi.³⁸

On the same day, August 5, 1532, Cabrillo, registered as “Juan Rodríguez, merchant,” acknowledged in a letter of recognition that he had an outstanding debt to Antonio de Luisi for a loan of 55,500 *maravedis*. He promised to repay the money within one year’s time or pay double the amount. Juan Rodríguez’s signature is found at the bottom of the power of attorney. These two documents concerning Cabrillo’s business affairs with Luisi were probably interrelated and the power of attorney served as part of the guarantee of repayment of the loan.³⁹

On August 14, 1532, nine days after he signed the power of attorney for Luisi in Seville, the Guatemalan *Procurador* Gabriel de Cabrera needed him for another deposition. This document is in the AGI in Seville and details how Juan Rodríguez, “merchant,” once again gave testimony in Seville about how they had travelled from Guatemala to Veracruz overland and then by ship to Cádiz and of the precious cargo that was transported by the *Procurador* for the Crown.⁴⁰

The documentation begins to thin out after this flurry of activity in Seville. The next notice of Cabrillo was in a letter written from Mexico by Jorge de Alvarado to the Town Council of Santiago in Guatemala, probably sent in early December 1532. Jorge, a resident of Mexico, was one of the captains appointed at different times by his brother Pedro de Alvarado, the Governor of Guatemala, to lead campaigns.⁴¹ In the letter, Jorge reported that a man named Santiago – no doubt the resident of Guatemala, Diego Sánchez de Santiago, another passenger who had travelled with Cabrillo on the *San Juan* from Veracruz to Spain – had just arrived on a ship that had capsized near the port of San Juan de Ulúa [Veracruz], and Santiago had brought news about this event and the success of the negotiations of the Guatemalan *Procurador* with the Crown in Spain. The dispatches were being sent “by way of Panama, with Juan Rodríguez.”⁴²

In 1532 Francisco Pizarro, pictured here, began the conquest of the Inca Empire. One of Cabrillo’s potentially lucrative business enterprises involved helping to supply the Spaniards engaged in this campaign.



Jorge de Alvarado added in his letter that since the matter was of great importance, he had hired a messenger to rush the news to Guatemala to take advantage of the “*oro al diezmo*” before the next smelting of gold at Christmas time. This referred to the concession granted to residents of Guatemala whereby they paid one-tenth in taxes to the Crown on future gold they mined. Shortly afterwards, on March 5, 1533, in a letter written in Puerto de Fonseca, Nicaragua, Pedro de Alvarado wrote that Juan Rodríguez had just arrived with the original copy of the Crown’s decrees, the *reales cédulas*, which were being sent to the Town Council of Santiago de Guatemala.⁴³

The next record of Cabrillo appears to be some ten months later on January 11, 1534 when he formed part of Alvarado’s new armada heading to Peru.⁴⁴ In the general review and inspection list of the soldiers compiled that day in the island of the Jagüeyes (near to the Bay of Realejo) by Governor Pedro de Alvarado there is a “Juan Rodríguez” as well as a “Juan Rodríguez Portuguese,” and both men appear on the roll call as horsemen enlisted to accompany the governor to Peru. This is noteworthy as it provides evidence that two men with the name “Juan Rodríguez” were at the same place at the same time.⁴⁵ While it is impossible to know what caused the chronicler Herrera y Tordesillas to confuse Cabrillo’s identity by adding the designation Portuguese as an additional surname, it is worth noting the existence of this direct contemporary.

It is logical that on such an important voyage, with such great potential, Cabrillo should be at the side of his captain and governor on his new venture; the timeline

Francisco Pizarro recruiting troops, and setting sail for Peru. The images are found in Juan Poma de Ayala's *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, completed around 1615.

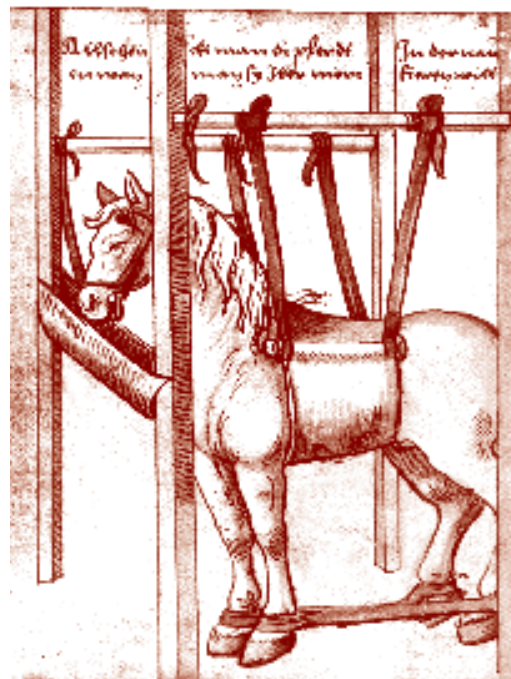
coincides with regard to Cabrillo's whereabouts and movements. Royal approval to carry out this expedition was delivered to Alvarado by *Procurador* Gabriel de Cabrera in January 1534; just in time, it appears, after being held up in Spain while the Crown investigated the matter of its missing gold. Cabrera was a witness to the inspection list (*alarde*) in the island of Jagüeyes, but was back home in Guatemala by February of that year.⁴⁶ This is the only documentation that we have located regarding Cabrillo's participation in the expedition to Peru, but shortly after he did develop a lucrative enterprise building ships and transporting horses and other goods to sell to the nouveau riche conquistadors of Peru.⁴⁷ It would appear that his participation in that armada would have paved the way to future trade opportunities with Peru.

We have a record of Cabrillo again in April 1535 in Guatemala, when he provided testimony one more time with Eugenio de Moscoso and Diego Sánchez de Santiago, for *Procurador* Gabriel de Cabrera. As part of the ongoing appeal process and to clear his



Early 1534 found Cabrillo cooperating closely with Guatemalan Governor Pedro de Alvarado in the latter's ventures in Peru. Cabrillo later supplied a highly valuable commodity - horses - for the Spanish conquistadors in Peru. This drawing dating from the late 1520s by the German artist Christoph Weiditz in his *Trachtenbuch* shows the contemporary method employed in transporting horses on board a ship.

Courtesy Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg



name, Cabrera had a document drawn up to explain the procedures and the customs on board ships for transporting gold and jewels. Cabrillo and the other witnesses mustered only terse replies to much of this new round of questions. Cabrillo stated the following: "He said that he had already said what he had to say, in Castile, regarding this very same matter."⁴⁸ Certainly these men who had travelled together on the *San Juan* to Spain were weary of the endless rounds of interrogations and sworn testimonies they had been subjected to in support of the *Procurador* and the missing gold. It is worth noting that the missing gold was never recovered and its whereabouts remained a mystery.

- 1 Writing about Cabrillo's time in Spain, Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 55 stated: "Details do not exist, but we can imagine that Juan Rodríguez stayed in Spain for as long as a year, courting Beatriz Sánchez, visiting the scenes of his youth, and purchasing supplies to take back to his estates in Guatemala."
- 2 In testimony dated August 1532, Cabrillo stated that he first met the ship's crew ten months earlier: see AGI, Justicia 706, N.4, Blas Gallego contra Gabriel de Cabrera, 29 de febrero, 1532, digital images (hereafter imgs.) 503, 854.
- 3 I have identified six documents in the *Justicia* section of the AGI, comprising in total more than 1,350 pages that are concerned with the voyage of the *San Juan* in 1531-32. The last Cabildo session prior to Gabriel de Cabrera's departure was in August 1531: see Kramer y Luján Muñoz, eds., *Libro Segundo del Cabildo*, 44-45. Meanwhile, records from a Guatemalan account book show that, on August 22, 1531, *Procurador* Cabrera was given approximately 5,002 pesos to take to Spain. See AGI, Indiferente General 1801, Relación de la hacienda que tiene su majestad.
- 4 Diego Sánchez de Santiago should not be confused with Cabrillo's brother-in-law Diego Sánchez de Ortega, sometimes called Diego Sánchez de Sevilla. There were three men called Diego Sánchez in Guatemala at the same time. The third one was Diego Sánchez de Talavera. See Sáenz de Santa María and Deola de Girón, *Libro Viejo*, 51, 137, 141, 188, 196.
- 5 Eugenio de Moscoso was both a city councilman (*regidor*) and a treasury official (*tesorero*) in Guatemala prior to 1532. While in Spain he was granted favors by the Crown and arranged to take his sister and niece back to Guatemala with him. See AGI, Guatemala 393, L.1, fols. 41v-42, Exención de almojarifazgo a Eugenio Moscoso, 20 de julio, 1532. He was also named first warden (*alcaide*) of the fortress. See AGI, Guatemala 393, L.1, fols. 36v-37, Real Provisión a Eugenio Moscoso, nombrándolo alcaide de la fortaleza que se ha mandado hacer para defensa de Santiago de Guatemala, 15 de julio, 1532. AGI, Justicia 706, N.4, Blas Gallego contra Gabriel de Cabrera, imgs. 154-156.
- 6 AGI, Justicia 706, N.4, Blas Gallego contra Gabriel de Cabrera, imgs. 145, 157. AGI, Justicia 1159, N.5, Los jueces oficiales de la Casa de la Contratación presentan información y pesquiza sobre el robo de más de mil pesos que faltaron de unos cajones que conducía para Su Majestad Gabriel de Cabrera, que le habían entregado en Guatemala los oficiales reales, 26 de enero, 1532, img. 94.
- 7 Diego Sánchez de Santiago testified that he did not let anyone else take charge of his possessions on board the ship, unlike the *Procurador* who, he noted, "had some gold jewels in a case without any type of security, kept at the head of the bed of this witness." AGI, Justicia 706, N.4, Blas Gallego contra Gabriel de Cabrera, imgs. 145, 157, 233, 234.
- 8 AGI, Justicia 1159, N.5, Los jueces oficiales de la Casa de la Contratación, img. 15.
- 9 According to the witnesses, most of the crew considered Ochoa to be a thief. See AGI, Justicia 706, N.4, Blas Gallego contra Gabriel de Cabrera, img. 159.
- 10 AGI, Justicia 1159, N.5, Los jueces oficiales de la Casa de la Contratación, imgs. 7-12, 21, 22.
- 11 *Ibid.*, imgs. 7-12. AGI, Justicia 707, N.6, Testimonio de los autos seguidos en la audiencia de la Contratación a petición de Juan de Ortega, 18 de marzo, 1532, img. 24.
- 12 AGI, Justicia 1159, N.5, Los jueces oficiales de la Casa de la Contratación, img. 71.
- 13 *Ibid.*, imgs. 18, 92-97. This exact testimony is repeated in AGI, Justicia 706, N.4, Blas Gallego contra Gabriel de Cabrera, imgs. 365-369.
- 14 The term for this document is from Latin, *ad perpetuam rei memoriam* (to serve as a permanent record of the matter).
- 15 AGI, Justicia 706, N.4, Blas Gallego contra Gabriel de Cabrera, img. 141.
- 16 *Ibid.*, img. 500.
- 17 Kelsey observed that Cabrillo did not know his exact age. See Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 12.
- 18 AGI, Justicia 707, N.6, Testimonio de los autos seguidos, imgs. 24-26. The amount was described as a gold bar weighing forty-three pesos and some grains and of nineteen karats. The amount Cabrillo borrowed from Celain was twenty-five ducats and sixty *maravedis*.
- 19 One of the passengers, in his testimony, noted that Juanes Celain was called the master of the ship but that "he did nothing" and the person who gave the orders was Blas Gallego. See AGI, Justicia 706, N.4, Blas Gallego contra Gabriel de Cabrera, img. 157.
- 20 AGI, Justicia 707, N.6, Testimonio de los autos seguidos, img. 26. AGI, Justicia 1152, N.1, R.1, Pleito fiscal con Blas Gallego y Rodrigo Álvarez, sobre el oro que trajeron de Indias por registrar, 26 de marzo, 1533, img. 72.
- 21 The scribes preferred to set up shop close to places with economic and commercial activity, one of them was this street near to the Cathedral. This practice dated back to the fourteenth century. See Pilar Ostos and María Luisa Pardo, *Documentos y notarios de Sevilla en el siglo XIV (1301-1350)* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2003), 21-22.
- 22 AHPS, Sección Protocolos Notariales. Signatura: 6685-P. Poder de Juan Rodríguez, residente en Guatemala a Alonso Sánchez Ortega. Sevilla, 13 de marzo, 1532; Signatura: 42-P. Juan Rodríguez, mercader, vecino de la ciudad de Santiago en la provincia de Guatemala, otorga poder a Antonio de Luisi, 5 de agosto, 1532; Signatura: 42-P. Juan Rodríguez, mercader, vecino de la ciudad de Santiago en la provincia de Guatemala, reconoce que debe pagar ciertas cantidades a Antonio de Luisi, 5 de agosto, 1532. Curiously, in the original housed in the AHPS, the profession of merchant shows clearly after his name but it is crossed out in the certified copy.
- 23 Personal communication with Esther González Pérez on August 4, 2016.
- 24 AGI, Justicia 707, N.6, Testimonio de los autos seguidos, imgs. 29-30.
- 25 Kelsey noted that Cabrillo's income from his *encomiendas* and mines made him rich "but just how rich we do not know." See *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 51, 54, 59-60; see also pages 50-51 and 54 for a discussion of rich gold placers near to Cabrillo's *encomienda* in Cobán. The *encomienda* of Cobán is also discussed in Kramer, *Encomienda Politics*, 76, 132, 143, 155-156.
- 26 In comparison, *Procurador* Cabrera declared that he was carrying 2,600 *pesos de oro* of his own money, and the total amount that he carried for the Crown was 5,000 *pesos de oro*. AGI, Justicia 706, N.4, Blas Gallego contra Gabriel de Cabrera, imgs. 309, 500. AGI, Justicia 1159, N.5, Los jueces oficiales de la Casa de la Contratación, img. 7.
- 27 AGI, Justicia 822, N.3, R.1, Pleito Fiscal: Gabriel de Cabrera, 28 de febrero, 1532, imgs. 13-16.
- 28 Though *escudero* refers to a person who carried his master's shield, there are several definitions of the term. See Roque Barcia, *Primer diccionario general etimológico de la lengua española*, 5 vols (Madrid: Álvarez Hermanos, 1881), vol. 2, p. 496: "In the past, he who received a stipend from a lord or person of distinction, and therefore was obliged to assist and attend to him at all times and occasions indicated." The *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* (accessed August 12, 2016 on <http://www.rae.ed>), gives a more distinguished definition of the title *escudero*: "Man who by his blood or kinship belonged to a certain class of nobility." However, judging by a reference dated August 29, 1541, in the second Town Council book, the *escuderos* were men named responsible for military obligations for underaged boys, whose fathers were absent. See Kramer y Luján Muñoz, eds., *Libro Segundo del Cabildo*, 347-350.
- 29 Juan Rodríguez registered as a *vecino* of Santiago on three different occasions, in 1524, 1527 and 1528. See Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 49, citing the *Libro Viejo*.
- 30 Searches in Seville have so far found no trace of a marriage record for Cabrillo and Beatriz.

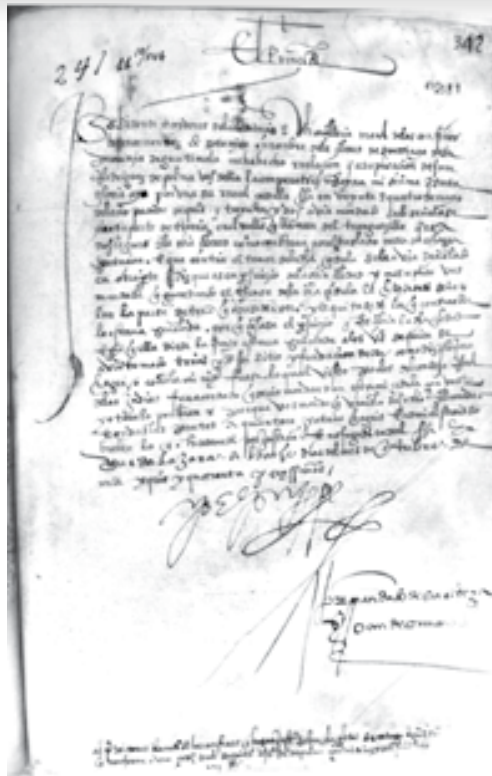
- 31 AGI, Guatemala 393, L.1, fols. 13v-14, Licencia a Juan Rodríguez de Palma de llevar a Guatemala doce marcos de plata labrada, 9 de mayo, 1532. A *marco* was a measurement for silver and gold; for silver one *marco* was 8 ounces, half a pound. Spain's commercial ambitions were such that items of silver and gold were to travel in one direction only, and that was towards Spain. Therefore, in 1519 it was prohibited to take to the Indies these items without special license. See Margarita García-Mauriño Mundi, *La pugna entre el Consulado de Cádiz y los jenízaros por las exportaciones a Indias* (1720-1765) (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, Secretariado de Publicaciones, 1999), 119.
- 32 AGI, Guatemala 393, L.1, fols. 14-14v, Exención de almojarifazgo a Juan Rodríguez de Palma, 9 de mayo, 1532. So far I have not found any information on Juan Rodríguez under either name "de Palma" or "Cabrillo" as part of Pedrarias' armada to the mainland (*Tierra Firme*). It is possible that he was part of a group that left Panama early on and went to Cuba. Personal communication with Carmen Mena García in Seville, April 2016, whose ground-breaking and exceptional research on Pedrarias and Panama are essential reading for an understanding of Spanish conquest and settlement of this region. See María del Carmen Mena García, *La sociedad de Panamá en el siglo XVI* (Sevilla: Excma. Diputación Provincial de Sevilla, 1984); *Sevilla y las flotas de Indias: la gran armada de Castilla del Oro (1513-1514)* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, Secretariado de Publicaciones, 1988); *Un linaje de conversos en tierras americanas: los testamentos de Pedrarias Dávila, gobernador de Castilla del Oro y Nicaragua* (León: Universidad de León, 2004); and *El oro del Darién: entradas y cabalgadas en la conquista de Tierra Firme (1509-1525)* (Sevilla: Centro de Estudios Andaluces, 2011).
- 33 Eugenio de Moscoso also sought license to take back two black male slaves and one white female slave: AGI, Guatemala 393, L.1, fols. 49-50, Licencia para esclavos a Eugenio Moscoso, 5 de agosto, 1532. Robinson Herrera wrote about the acquisition and trade in African slaves in sixteenth century Guatemala. He noted that the purchase while in Spain of one or two slaves was not uncommon and that a royal license was needed to import them. These grants specified the use of slaves as household servants and not for resale, though Herrera speculated that this admonition "likely went unheeded." Robinson A. Herrera, *Natives, Europeans, and Africans in Sixteenth-Century Santiago de Guatemala* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 112-113. See page 116, where he mentions Juan Rodríguez de Palma's permission to purchase one male and one female slave.
- 34 Cabrillo's brother-in-law is named Diego Sánchez de Sevilla in these documents; in the same way that the Crown officials identified Juan Rodríguez as "de Palma," they identified Diego Sánchez as "de Sevilla."
- 35 AGI, Guatemala 393, L.1, fols. 17v-18, Concesión de tierras a Juana Rodríguez, 24 de mayo, 1532.
- 36 The date of the *encomienda* grant to Cabrillo was March 31, 1540. AGI, Justicia 290, El fiscal con Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo sobre el pueblo de Cobán, 1563, fols. 1, 4. According to the laws regarding succession of *encomiendas*, the grant would have gone to the widow or any legitimate children, and not to a brother-in-law.
- 37 AHPS, Protocolos notariales, Signatura: 1440, Francisco Núñez de Illescas y Luis Sánchez Dalvo, otorgan poder a Francisco Marroquín, obispo de Guatemala, a Cristóbal de Salvatierra y a Pedro de Ovid, para que solicitasen de los herederos de Juan Rodríguez Cabrillas [sic], la entrega de los 700 y tantos pesos de oro que les había dejado a deber por ciertas herramientas que le vendieron, 29 de octubre, 1551, fol. 1814.
- 38 AHPS. Sección Protocolos Notariales. Signatura: 42-P. Juan Rodríguez, mercader, vecino de la ciudad de Santiago en la provincia de Guatemala, otorga poder a Antonio de Luisi, 5 de agosto, 1532.
- 39 AHPS. Sección Protocolos Notariales. Signatura: 42-P. Juan Rodríguez, mercader, vecino de la ciudad de Santiago en la provincia de Guatemala, reconoce que debe pagar ciertas cantidades a Antonio de Luisi, 5 de agosto, 1532.
- 40 AGI, Justicia 706, N.4, Blas Gallego contra Gabriel de Cabrera, imgs. 854-860.
- 41 For a discussion of the important role that Jorge de Alvarado played in the conquest of Guatemala and in the distribution of *encomiendas*, see Kramer, *Encomienda Politics*, 63-84.
- 42 Diego Sánchez de Santiago soon made his way back to Guatemala, where he remained. The letter from Jorge de Alvarado has no date, but he probably wrote it sometime after November 29, 1532, when the news got to Mexico, and before January 3, 1533, when the copies of the decrees were presented at the Town Council meeting. Jorge's letter can be found in Rafael de Arévalo, ed. *Colección de documentos antiguos del Arquivo del Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad de Guatemala* (Guatemala: Imprenta de Luna, 1857), 191-192. One of the reasons Cabrera as *Procurador* had been sent to Spain was precisely to negotiate a reduction in the tax on gold. See Kramer y Luján Muñoz, eds., *Libro Segundo del Cabildo*, 79-80.
- 43 The letter has no year on it but must have been written in 1533. A facsimile of this letter was published in the *Libro Viejo* but the editor incorrectly transcribed the day of the month as the 23rd and not the 24th of March. This error was repeated by Kelsey, with him incorrectly stating the year as 1534. Pedro de Alvarado was no longer in Puerto de Fonseca at this time, having moved on to Puerto Viejo, Ecuador by March 1534. See José Antonio Villacorta, *Libro Viejo de la fundación de Guatemala, y papeles relativos a don Pedro de Alvarado* (Guatemala, C.A.: Tipografía Nacional, 1934), 289 and Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 60, 201, fn.80. Alvarado wrote another letter dated March 10, 1534, from Puerto Viejo to the Governor of Panama. See AGI, Guatemala 39, R.4, N.9, Carta de Pedro de Alvarado, gobernador de Honduras, 10 de marzo, 1534.
- 44 A transcription of the original document, regrettably with many errors, including the omission of the name "Juan Rodríguez," can be found in Carmelo Sáenz de Santa María, "La hueste de don Pedro de Alvarado en la historia del Perú," *Revista de Indias* 43:171 (1983), 315-325. Sáenz de Santa María notes on page 316 that the "isla de los Jagueyes" was in the Bay of Realejo and that Alvarado had moved there from the Bay of Fonseca. I want to thank W. George Lovell for sharing with me a copy of the list (*alarde*) transcribed recently by the researcher Esther González Pérez and housed in the AGI, Guatemala 41, N.1, Escrituras presentadas por Juan Méndez de Sotomayor, 1534, fols 32r.-35r.
- 45 Although it has not been possible to corroborate with other documentation the identity of the two men named "Juan Rodríguez" in the list, Juan Rodríguez Portugués might have been a citizen and *encomendero* in Panama in the 1520s and 1530s. I want to thank Carmen Mena García for sharing with me some citations regarding Juan Rodríguez Portugués, citizen of Panama, from two of her books. See Mena, *La Sociedad de Panamá*, 232 and *El oro del Darién*, 397, 401, 425, 428.
- 46 On February 23, 1534 Gabriel de Cabrera presented numerous royal decrees to the members of the Town Council in Santiago de Guatemala: see Kramer and Luján, *Libro Segundo del Cabildo*, 111. Cabrera did not accompany Alvarado to Peru, despite being a witness to the inspection list. Sáenz de Santa María surmised, incorrectly, that since he was a witness he also went with the armada. See "La hueste de don Pedro de Alvarado," 318.
- 47 The armada was a complete fiasco for Governor Alvarado and many of the men who went with him remained in South America. The returnees had no motive to highlight their participation in the armada in their requests to the Crown to receive awards for their services. Therefore, it is hard to find accounts among the Guatemalan documents.
- 48 AGI, Justicia 706, N.4, Blas Gallego contra Gabriel de Cabrera, imgs. 229-235.

Chapter 2

Grant of Agricultural Land in the Tianguecillo to Juan Rodríguez de Palma in 1532

Among the privileges that “Juan Rodríguez de Palma” sought from the Crown and received while he was in Spain was a specific grant for a league of land in the valley of Tianguecillo.¹ This grant, dated May 24, 1532, is of general interest for understanding Spanish landholding patterns in Guatemala during the early colonial period, and of particular significance in furnishing further evidence that Juan Rodríguez de Palma and Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo were one and the same person. The history of Cabrillo is enriched with these additional sources about his land grants dating from the 1530s and 1540s.

While in Spain, Cabrillo requested the land as a reward and in repayment for his services, both for him and for his heirs. In the royal decree it stated that the league: “should begin at the first stream past the entryway from the main road (*El Camino Real*) on the right-hand side on the way to a grove of pines ... and should be measured in a rectangle beginning from the stream onward so that he can bring in his livestock and clear the land and sow and plant vineyards and other trees ...” On the same day Cabrillo’s cousin, Juana Rodríguez, asked for



The Royal cédula of October 11, 1546, in which the Crown voided a land grant to Cabrillo - named here Juan Rodríguez de Palma - in the valley of Panchoy in favor of a previous grant in the valley of Tianguecillo. For reasons yet unknown, Cabrillo and his family had sought land in Panchoy, in preference to what they had already been granted in Tianguecillo.

Archivo General de Centro America, A1.2.4. Leg. 2195, Exp. 15749, fol. 342.

a similar grant of land in the same region.² Four months later, Eugenio de Moscoso, fellow shipmate from Mexico on the *San Juan* to Seville and citizen of Santiago de Guatemala, requested a league of land in the same valley,

specifying that it should be next to the one that Juan Rodríguez had asked for and that he also wished to plant trees, have a vineyard, and for his children to inherit it after his death.³

The Tianguecillo, which means small market in Nahuatl, was near the town of Chimaltenango and was recognized as a desirable area for farming, with rivers and natural springs nearby, open plains for raising livestock, and an abundance of maize.⁴ In 1527, the Town Council members deliberated at



Above: The cathedral church of San José and the palace of the Captains General of Guatemala in Antigua Guatemala. In the distance the Volcán de Agua looms over the old colonial city. Courtesy Fototeca, CIRMA, Antigua Guatemala.

Colección "Fotografía Japonesa": FG-005-P01-005: Juan José de Jesús Yas

length over that site and the valley of Almolonga when they were choosing a place to found their city.⁵ What was also appealing about the Tianguecillo for some of the members was its location in an open area, with better access to the Indigenous villages and provinces where many of them held towns in *encomienda* or hoped to in the near future.⁶ Although they finally ended up founding Santiago in the Almolonga valley, the Cabildo considered the fertile valley of the Tianguecillo as part of their communal land. Nonetheless, Spanish citizens continued to seek rights to use the lands for their livestock and agriculture.

In the second Town Council book (*Libro Segundo del Cabildo (1530-1541)*) there are several references to the Tianguecillo. For example, a temporary license,

but not ownership, was given to Baltasar de Mendoza in January 1532, to place his herd of sheep “in Tianguecillo near to Chimaltenango, where a spring is found, as long as this causes no injury to the Indians or to any other person.”⁷ The exact conditions regarding the use of these uncultivated lands, however, became a matter of escalating dispute. In September 1535, the Governor and the Town Council members proclaimed the following:

That in times past, the city had chosen the plains of the Tianguecillo as its vacant lands, for their livestock to graze there, and notwithstanding this, some persons are buying up these vacant lands, saying that before the war, they belonged to the Indians, and



The Volcán de Agua dominates the Valley of Panchoy where Cabrillo and his family laid claim to a parcel of land. Courtesy Fototeca, CIRMA, Antigua Guatemala.

Colección "Fotografía Japonesa": FG-005-P03-074: José Domingo Noriega

others are taking possession and ownership of this land, which they cannot do because the Indians lost the lands of those uncultivated regions because of the war that was fought against them and because of their rebellion in that war. Therefore, [the city] said that they were ordering, and they did order, and they said that they were indicating, and they did indicate once again that all of those lands now lying between this city and the Tianguecillo for five leagues all around in every direction are the vacant lands of the city. And they ordered that no Indians should occupy those lands nor should anyone buy them from the Indians, on pain of losing what they had paid for them, and they ordered that this be proclaimed so that everyone should know it.⁸

Although there is no definitive proof of when he got back to Santiago de Guatemala from Spain, Cabrillo most likely returned to establish his household with his new wife Beatríz around the middle of 1533. According to a letter from Governor Alvarado dated March 24, 1533, Cabrillo had met up with him in Puerto de Fonseca, Nicaragua, on his way to Guatemala.⁹ It is believed that Cabrillo would have presented his royal decree for the land grant in Tianguecillo to the Town Council in Santiago not long afterwards.¹⁰ For reasons that remain unclear, however, Cabrillo was not given the league in the Tianguecillo described in such detail in the decree, but rather a plot of land in the Panchoy Valley.¹¹ One possibility is that, despite the royal concession, the land in the Tianguecillo was not ceded to him due to the city claiming it as communal land, or perhaps Cabrillo changed his mind about the desirability of that particular parcel of land, preferring instead land in the Panchoy valley.

In the end, Cabrillo's tenure of the land in Panchoy was not destined to be straightforward or lasting. Indeed, it became the source of many woes for Cabrillo and his wife. On September 11, 1541, the city of Santiago de Guatemala was almost completely destroyed by flooding and mudslides. There was discussion by prominent Spanish residents in October (1541) about

moving the recently devastated city to either the Tianguecillo or to the nearby Panchoy Valley. Panchoy was closer to where some residents had their wheat farms and cattle ranches, and the desire for continuity and reduced disruption was no doubt a determining factor. The Crown officials, meanwhile, wrote that Bishop Marroquín was behind the movement to have the city rebuilt at the less desirable site of the Tianguecillo, in order to be near to *encomienda* towns held by him and his relatives.¹² Finally, the decision was made to move the city to the Panchoy Valley, and for Cabrillo

and some other residents, this meant giving up their agricultural lands that would now impinge on and be incompatible with the property lines of the new settlement. Once again, as a result of unusual and dire circumstances, Cabrillo's affairs became complicated, generating a paper trail of documents. These sources help to confirm his identity and trace the history of his land grant, which stayed in his family long after his death in 1543.

The third Town Council book (*Libro Tercero del Cabildo, 1541-1553*) recorded the minutes of two meetings in 1542 and one in 1543 regarding Cabrillo's league of land in the Tianguecillo, which was originally granted in May 1532 in Spain to "Juan Rodríguez de Palma."¹³ Significantly, in the first three Town Council books that cover the period from 1524

to 1553, he is referred to only as "Juan Rodríguez." Nevertheless, as all the documentation here involves the league of land in the Tianguecillo, and specifically references the royal decree of May 1532 (granted as a result of "Juan Rodríguez de Palma's" petition while in Spain), and also includes mention of his wife Beatriz, there is no doubt whose land grant is under discussion.



An encomendero of the early seventeenth century pictured in Juan Poma de Ayala's *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*. Following successful military campaigns in Mexico and Guatemala, Cabrillo's services were amply repaid with grants of *encomiendas*. By the mid-1530s, his obscure and humble origins were a distant memory. At the time of his death his estate was one of the wealthiest in Central America.

On June 12, 1542, the proceedings of the Town Council meeting noted that Cabrillo and his wife held a league of land in the Panchoy Valley, and that because the city was now being moved there, this

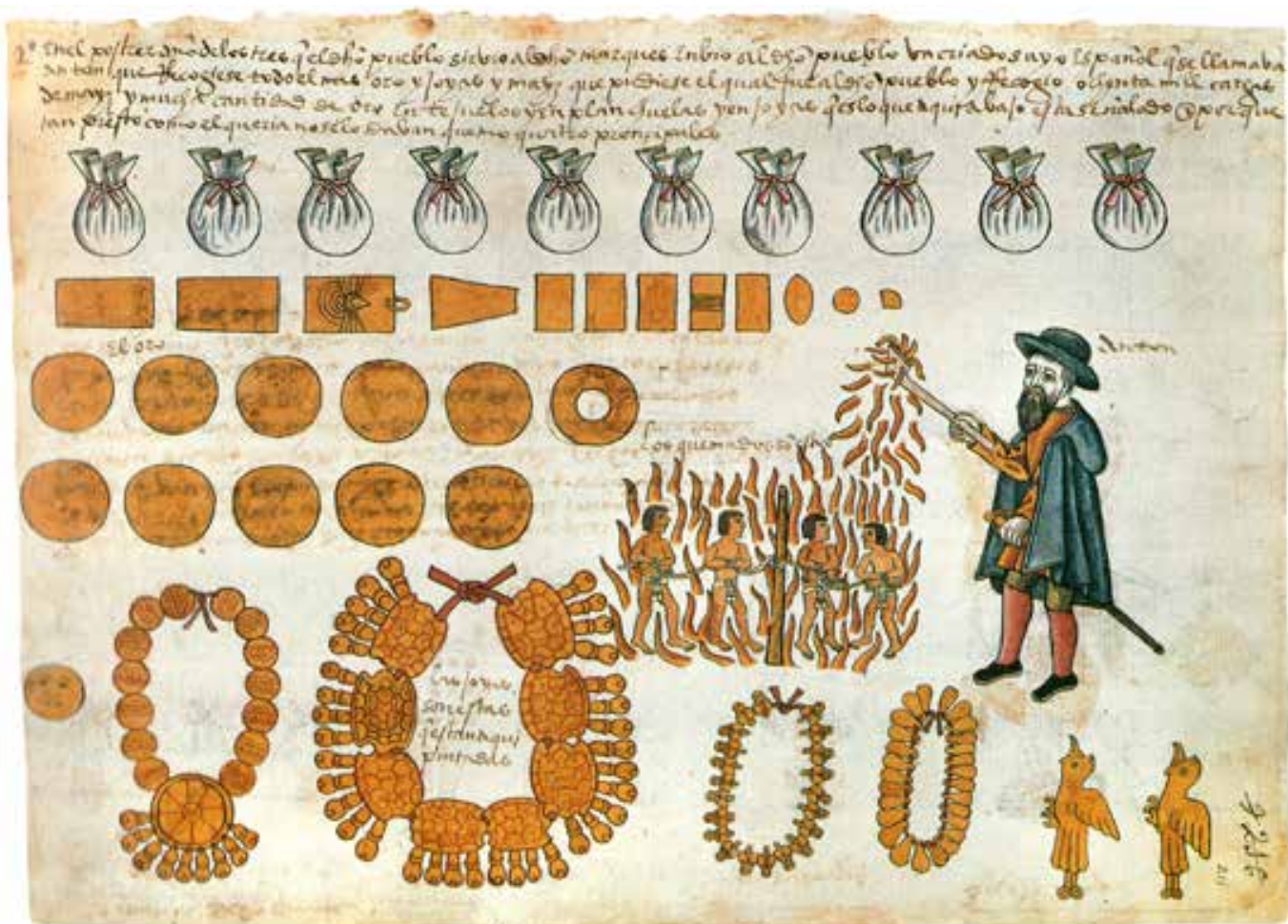
land and land held by other residents was greatly needed and had to be taken for the new city.

On that day, the said justices and city councilmen (*regidores*) stated that inasmuch as the league of land owned by Juan Rodríguez and his wife on the outskirts of this city, known as Panca [Panchoy], because this city is moving to the valley located there, and because for that reason certain cornfields and lands have been taken from residents of this city because of the great need that exists for the settling of this city, the said land that the said Juan Rodríguez possesses is required, and because this land was given to him by the Governor of this province by virtue of a royal grant from His Majesty, therefore the



said land that he holds shall be used to provide cornfields and lands to residents of this city, and so is it proclaimed, and Juan Rodríguez should be notified and in respect of the grant of that league of land given by His Majesty the said wife of Juan Rodríguez, should take the land known as the Tianguecillo, as contained in that land grant that was presented, and that Juan Rodríguez requested ... and she should leave this land that was indicated by the said Governor, that she currently holds and that otherwise she should be given three hundred gold pesos for the said land and nothing more and she should leave the other plot of land ... and she should choose one or the other.¹⁴

Military operations depicted in the *Florentine Codex*. Fray Bernardino de Sahagún compiled this work with Nahuatl research assistants and artists, between 1545 and 1590. The conquest of Mesoamerica proceeded through a series of dramatic events, vividly described in both Spanish and Indian sources. As a young conquistador, Cabrillo sought his destiny in the service of a number of captains - Narváez, Cortés and Alvarado. The conquest he participated in would eventually involve the human and natural resources of the Americas. Cabrillo's wealth was based primarily on his mines in Guatemala, his *encomiendas* and his land holdings. Following his death in 1543 his family attempted, with varying success, to continue what he had begun.



Indigenous representation of cloth and gold tribute as well as Spanish atrocities. *Codex Kingsborough / Tepellaoztoc* was produced during the 1550s and describes Spanish abuses in a region of the former Aztec empire. The codex is conserved in the British Museum.

And so it was decided that Cabrillo's wife Beatríz should take the league of land in the Tianguecillo (as specified in the aforesaid decree), and surrender the one they had in the Panchoy Valley. The Town Council informed Beatríz that if she were not in agreement with the exchange of land she would be given 300 *pesos* and nothing else, and that she must choose either the land in the Tianguecillo or the money. Eleven days later on June 23, Cabrillo's wife was notified that the land in the Tianguecillo would be measured and given to her, as established in the original grant.¹⁵

Despite the specific directives of 1542 with regard to the land, a year later in June 1543, and after the news of Cabrillo's death reached the city,

records show that the Town Council of Guatemala was still admonishing Cabrillo's wife to relinquish the land in Panchoy. They needed the land for "smallholdings and vacant land" for the new city, because "that land is useful for the settlement of this city and it is land that is next to the said settlement." An attorney representing the municipal officers ordered that the wife of Juan Rodríguez be notified of the following: "Beatríz de Ortega ... must leave the said land [in Panchoy] and she should be given and allocated the league of land that His Majesty ordered [that she receive] in Tianguecillo." Once again they gave assurances that trustworthy people would measure the land within the next ten days.¹⁶ The moving of the city gave rise to new conflicts over land ownership, no longer between the Indigenous inhabitants and the Spanish conquistadors who had recently arrived and who had taken their ancestral lands as part of their booty, but now between the Spaniards themselves. It appears that some Spanish residents, like Beatríz Sánchez de Ortega, did not give up without a struggle.

As a result of the documentation that surfaced unexpectedly in the AGI (Seville) and in the Guatemalan Town Council books (at the HSA in New York City) about the disputed land grant, it seemed logical to carry out a limited search in the Guatemalan National Archive in Guatemala City for “Juan Rodríguez de Palma.” No one previously researching Cabrillo had made that connection or realized that he used three different names.

In the General Archive of Central America (*Archivo General de Centro América*, hereafter AGCA), in the old card catalogue, there is record of three documents under the name Juan Rodríguez de Palma, and all concerning the league of land in the Tianguecillo.¹⁷

An original royal decree that was dispatched to Guatemala from Spain in October 1546, currently preserved in a bound book in the AGCA together with other decrees provides further crucial information. In it, the Crown ordered that the president and judges of the recently established royal tribunal in Central America, called the *Audiencia Real de los Confines*, respect the original grant of May 24, 1532, and that the Cabrillo family be given the land as ordered, but in the Tianguecillo and not elsewhere. It also stated that the land close to the new city (in Panchoy) must be relinquished to the Town Council, because:

Counter to the ruling in the said decree, land had been granted in a different area, and it is in conflict with the said city and I was petitioned to order that the ruling in the said decree be maintained and that he be given the land that he was supposed to have and the other piece of land be removed, the one that against this ruling he had been given, and that way the harm to the city would cease.

Evidently the dispute between Cabrillo’s widow, Beatríz Sánchez de Ortega and the authorities continued. In October 1546, almost four years after the death of Cabrillo, they still referred to him as “Juan Rodríguez de Palma.”¹⁸ This name occurs only

in documentation emanating from the Crown and was never used by Cabrillo personally during his lifetime or by officials writing up documents in Guatemala, and certainly not by his family. His widow and children continued to fight numerous disputes after his death over rights to *encomiendas*. The name used most often by them was Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, and his eldest son and heir

was named Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo de Medrano.¹⁹

Originals (and copies) of the 1532 and the 1546 royal decrees for the league of land in the Tianguecillo, name Cabrillo as Juan Rodríguez de Palma. Therefore Beatríz and his two sons knew about this name because it was the one used consistently in those far-reaching decrees.

In addition, Beatríz, a native of Seville, would have known that “de Palma” referred to the town of Palma de Micer Gilio, modern-day Palma del Río in Córdoba, Spain.²⁰ A significant volume of documents produced over several generations of the Cabrillo family in Guatemala has survived, most the result of challenges to their rights to hold certain *encomiendas*. It is curious that Palma de Micer Gilio was never mentioned in the disputes over *encomiendas* or in the proof of merits and services (*probanzas de méritos y servicios*) written about Cabrillo and presented by his descendants. This leads us to speculate that the disclosure of information about his origins, specifically his place of birth, was not of any benefit to the family and would endanger some aspect of the premise of their petitions to the Crown about their father’s merits and achievements.

Several archives preserve documentation about this land grant: in the Archivo General de Indias (AGI) in Seville, the Hispanic Society of America (HSA) in New York City and the Archivo General de Centro América (AGCA) in Guatemala City. It is unusual to trace sixteenth-century events and people so seamlessly among disparate unpublished manuscript sources in archives in three different countries.

**Originals (and copies)
of the 1532 and
the 1546 royal
decrees for
the league of land
in the Tianguecillo,
name Cabrillo as Juan
Rodríguez de Palma.**

Notes

- 1 AGI, Guatemala 393, L.1, fols. 15v-16, Concesión de terreno a Juan Rodríguez de Palma, 24 de mayo, 1532.
- 2 AGI, Guatemala 393, L.1, fols. 17v-18, Concesión de tierras a Juana Rodríguez, 24 de mayo, 1532.
- 3 AGI, Guatemala 393, L.1, fols. 56v-57, Concesión de tierra a Eugenio de Moscoso, 9 de septiembre, 1532.
- 4 For a discussion of the location of the Tianguecillo see Laura E. Matthew, *Memories of Conquest: Becoming Mexicano in Colonial Guatemala* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 87. In addition, see Matthew and Sergio F. Romero for the use of Nahuatl place-names in colonial Guatemala, and the importance of Nahuatl and of the Central American dialect of that language. "Nahuatl and Pipil in Colonial Guatemala: A Central American Counterpoint," *Ethnohistory* 59:4 (Fall 2012), 765-783.
- 5 Rafael de Arévalo, ed., *Libro de actas del ayuntamiento de la ciudad de Santiago de Guatemala* (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1932), 35.
- 6 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 48.
- 7 Kramer and Luján Muñoz, eds., *Libro Segundo del Cabildo*, 56-57. On 26 January, 1532 Mendoza was serving as a city councilman (*regidor*).
- 8 *Ibid.*, 146.
- 9 Villacorta, *Libro Viejo de la fundación de Guatemala*, 289.
- 10 See Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 56-57 who also wrote that Juan and Beatríz would have been setting up their house in Santiago in the summer of 1533.
- 11 Hispanic Society of America, *Libro Tercero del Cabildo* (1541-1553), (hereafter *LC3*, HSA), (Hiersemann 418/239), fol. 28; 12th of June, 1542. The Panchoy region is called "Pancan" here.
- 12 Christopher H. Lutz, *Santiago de Guatemala, 1541-1773: City, Caste, and the Colonial Experience* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 6-8. Kramer, *Encomienda Politics*, 167. AGI, Guatemala 45, *Oficiales Reales al Rey*, 14 de octubre, 1541.
- 13 *LC3*, HSA (Hiersemann 418/239) fols. 28, 32, 63; the 12th and the 23rd of June, 1542 and the 17th of June, 1543.
- 14 Cabrillo's land was also needed for cornfields (*milpas*). *LC3*, HSA (Hiersemann 418/239) fol. 28; 12th of June, 1542.
- 15 *LC3*, HSA (Hiersemann 418/239) fol. 32; 23rd of June, 1542.
- 16 Spanish naming practices in the sixteenth century were not consistent. Beatríz de Ortega was the same person as Beatríz Sánchez de Ortega.
- 17 The card catalogue in the AGCA was painstakingly developed and shaped by the dedicated archivist and director of the Guatemalan archive, José Joaquín Pardo, who passed away in 1964.
- 18 AGCA, A1.2.4. Leg.2195, Exp.15749, Su majestad declara nulo el reparto de tierras hecho en la persona de Juan Rodríguez Palma ... por ser ejidos de la ciudad de Santiago, 11 de octubre, 1546, fol. 342. There is a copy of this document in a Registry of the royal decrees in the AGI; see AGI, Guatemala, 393, L.3, fol. 29, Sobre concesión de tierra a Juan Rodríguez de Palma, 11 de octubre, 1546. The other documents concerning Rodríguez de Palma in the AGCA are certified copies of the 1546 royal decree, probably presented in later disputes concerning this parcel of land.
- 19 The legal disputes over Cabrillo's *encomiendas* are discussed in Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 51-55, 58-60.
- 20 The town of Palma de Micer Gilio was often referred to as just Palma or *la villa de Palma* in the documentation of the fifteenth and sixteenth century. Palma del Río is close to Seville and references to "Palma" in Seville would at that time have meant this town and not the town Palma del Condado in Huelva nor the neighborhood of Seville with that same name: personal correspondence with the official city historian, Manuel Muñoz in Palma del Río, April 14, 2016.

San Salvador
Photographer George Adkins



Chapter 3

Encomendero, merchant, and shipbuilder of Santiago de Guatemala 1532-1542

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo's wealth was tangible when he boarded the *San Juan* in 1531 in Veracruz, Mexico, declaring 1,500 gold *pesos* that he carried in his possession. This was his first, and only, voyage back to Spain after eighteen years in the Indies. Like others before him he returned briefly to be married, in his case to the sister of the man he shared his *encomiendas* and mining operations with in Guatemala, Diego Sánchez de Ortega. Cabrillo's future father-in-law, Alonso Sánchez de Ortega, was an established merchant in Seville, and shortly after his arrival in Cádiz in February 1532, Cabrillo made his way to Seville to meet with him and give him a power of attorney to negotiate with the House of Trade. During his stay, Cabrillo also took out loans from a Perugian merchant and successfully petitioned the Crown for rewards, while he arranged to take his cousin Juana Rodríguez to Guatemala to marry his brother-in-law, Diego Sánchez de Ortega.

These activities were consistent with the acts of a man who had been repaid for his services in the conquest by a grateful captain, Pedro de Alvarado, and had been fortunate enough to receive an *encomienda*



Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar, governor of the island of Cuba. In 1518 Velázquez ordered Hernán Cortés to initiate conquest on the mainland. Later regretting his decision, he sent a second army under Pánfilo de Narváez to take overall command of the expedition. Among those who went with Narváez was a young and ambitious conquistador by the name of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo. At the battle of Cempoala on May 24, 1520, Cortés outwitted and defeated Narváez, and then convinced his men to join his forces. Thus Cabrillo switched his allegiance and participated in the conquest of the Aztecs.

that lived up to its promise in the short term, placing a large, well-situated Indigenous population at Cabrillo's disposal. Cabrillo had also taken advantage of the opportunity presented by the discovery of mines near his *encomienda*. It was a combination of timing, good fortune, skill and perseverance.

Cabrillo had missed out on *encomiendas* distributed in Mexico, being part of a later wave of conquerors who came from Cuba with Pánfilo de Narváez, sent by Governor Diego Velázquez to challenge Cortés' power. That expedition failed, and Cabrillo and others soon defected and took part with Cortés in 1520 in the siege and recapture of



Above: Indians constructing brigantines for the conquest of Tenochtitlan under the supervision of Spanish and Indigenous overseers, in Fray Diego Durán's *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España y islas de Tierra Firme*, completed around 1581. Cabrillo was involved in the construction and fitting out of the Spaniards' vessels that would play a vital role in the attack on the city.



Right: Spanish forces disembark at Veracruz from the *Florentine Codex*.

Tenochtitlán. Recognized as a crossbowman and familiar with the process of preparing pitch or tar for caulking the ships, Cabrillo was involved in building and supplying the brigantines used by Cortés. The witness Francisco López noted that Cabrillo had charge of work essential to the launching of the inland fleet, supplying materials for the bergantines and saying that “as a man of the sea he understood it all.”¹

In later testimony, speaking of the services provided by Cabrillo, his grandson stated:

The said General, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, my paternal grandfather, left the Kingdom of Spain and came to these parts with Pánfilo de Narváez ... and then in the [servicel] of Hernando Cortés, who discovered, conquered and populated the great city of Mexico and its provinces, and was there in person with his weapons, servants and horses when the lake

and city were taken, and during all the subsequent battles and skirmishes that took place, until that city acknowledged and bowed to your Royal Crown. He served by suffering many extreme labors, wounds, risks and dangers to his life, none of which sufficed to prevent him from continuing and persevering to achieve even greater discoveries and conquests. And further, continuing to provide those services, he also participated in the conquest and pacification of the city and provinces of Guajaca [Oaxaca], Tututepeque, Chontales and Miges in the company of Captain Francisco de Orozco, until they were conquered and became subjects of Your Majesty.²

Cabrillo’s family later contended that Cortés had wished to bestow further rewards on him, but that Cabrillo declined them, remaining zealous and keen to continue his services to the Crown until the end. After four years in Mexico, he joined with Pedro de Alvarado, who had been dispatched by

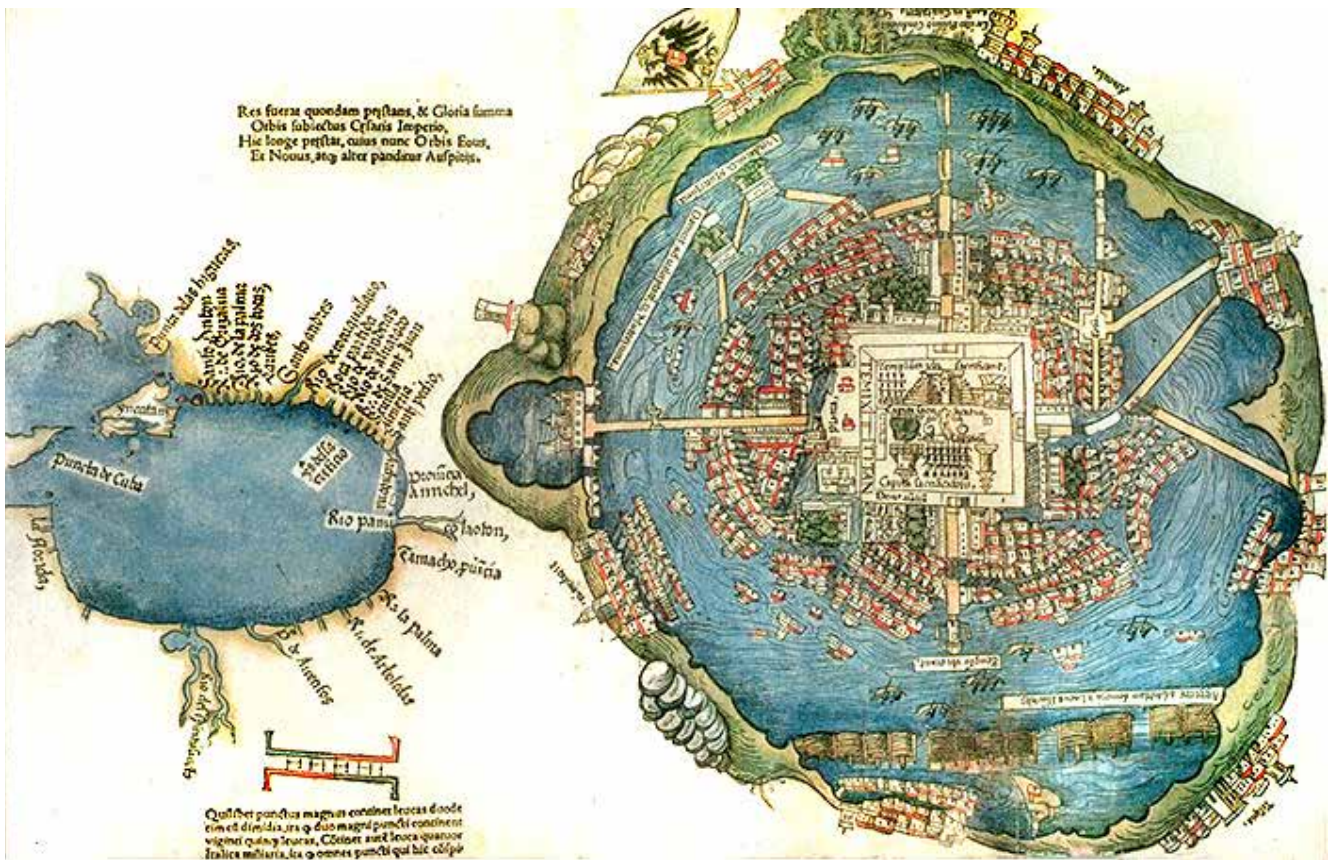
Cortés to explore and conquer Indigenous kingdoms to the south in present-day Guatemala. Cabrillo and others who had served in Cuba and Mexico, like Sancho de Barahona and Juan de Espinar, made up the first group of conquerors that moved on to Guatemala, with hopes of finding a new land where they could improve their prospects for the future, and were rewarded for their efforts with large *encomiendas*.³ Low yields of precious ore, however, as in Mexico, only provided revenue to a lucky few; and it was gold in the end, not tribute items that

the Indigenous populations were obliged to pay to the *encomenderos*, that paid for Spanish supplies and arms.⁴

What singled out Cabrillo from most of the other *encomenderos* of New Spain and Guatemala was his expertise as a shipwright and caulker, an ability that Cortés employed earlier in the siege of Mexico. Later, Cabrillo’s contribution was significant in building the armada that Guatemalan Governor Pedro de Alvarado planned to sail to the Spice Islands. Certainly there were other *conquistador-encomenderos* in Guatemala at this time who got rich quick, but few had the skill and ambition of Cabrillo. Prosperous *encomenderos* were content to have their affairs managed by foremen, miners and servants, while they tended to their extended



Brigantines constructed by Cortés’ men, including Cabrillo, launching an attack on the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán. Florentine Codex.



Map of Tenochtitlán published in Nuremberg in 1524. This plan clearly shows the city's location in the middle of Lake Texcoco. Pedestrian access to the capital was restricted to a number of key causeways. Cortés therefore relied heavily on watercraft to lay siege to the city. Brigantines were an essential element used by the Spaniards in their campaign to topple Montezuma's throne.

In 1520 the young Cabrillo astutely changed his allegiance from his former commander Pánfilo de Narváez to the ascendant Hernán Cortés. In doing so, he set out on a path to power and wealth. In 1528 Cortés returned to Spain and presented himself to Charles V. Around this time the German artist Christoph Weiditz sketched his likeness.

Courtesy Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg

families and many dependents in the urban centers founded soon after conquest. Wealthy *encomenderos* often served as members of the Town Council but Cabrillo never joined the ranks of his peers by serving on the *Cabildo*. Unlike Cabrillo, certain other hardened conquistadors of his generation, such as Sancho de Barahona and



Juan de Espinar, had ambitions to be *Cabildo* members; and Cabrillo's son and namesake, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo de Medrano, did serve and was an active member of the *Cabildo*.⁵

Testimony by some Indigenous witnesses from Mexico, a few of them Cabrillo's slaves who served on his *encomienda* of Cobán, indicated that he was active in his *encomienda*, residing there for periods of time and presiding over his own affairs, in contrast to several examples of other *encomenderos*, who rarely if ever visited their *encomiendas*.⁶ Cabrillo proclaimed

himself not only an *escudero* (a man responsible for military obligations for underage boys, whose fathers were absent) while in Spain but also a merchant, which ruled out any pretensions of being an *hidalgo* (a gentleman).

According to the conventions of the time, an *hidalgo* was unable to “perform manual labor or engage in commerce,” and was traditionally a man of leisure; this designation was appropriated with ease by many of his *cabildo*-serving peers in Guatemala. Betting was a favorite pastime of men like Governor Alvarado and other wealthy *encomenderos* such as Juan de Espinar, who had empty hours to fill and money to spend.⁷ Cabrillo was having none of that!

Despite recent searches in archives in Seville and Guatemala to locate a “proof of merit and services” (*probanza de méritos y servicios*) for

Cabrillo dating from the 1530s, which was alluded to by the Crown in one of their royal provisions in 1532, no copy has been found. Several of these petitions were transported on the *San Juan* to Spain in 1531, and Cabrillo testified that the Guatemalan *Procurador* Cabrera had put him in charge of their safekeeping. One in particular was drawn up in Guatemala by Cabrillo’s partner and future brother-in-law, Diego Sánchez de Ortega, but Cabrillo’s early proof of merit and services, if it existed, did not get archived at the AGI nor did it ever get copied and filed in Guatemala.

Sánchez de Ortega was not the only one to prepare a proof of merit in 1531; other conquerors of Guatemala such as Luis de Vivar, Pedro Portocarrero and Marco Ruiz also presented these petitions, as did Town Council representative Hernán Méndez, who did so on behalf of the householders

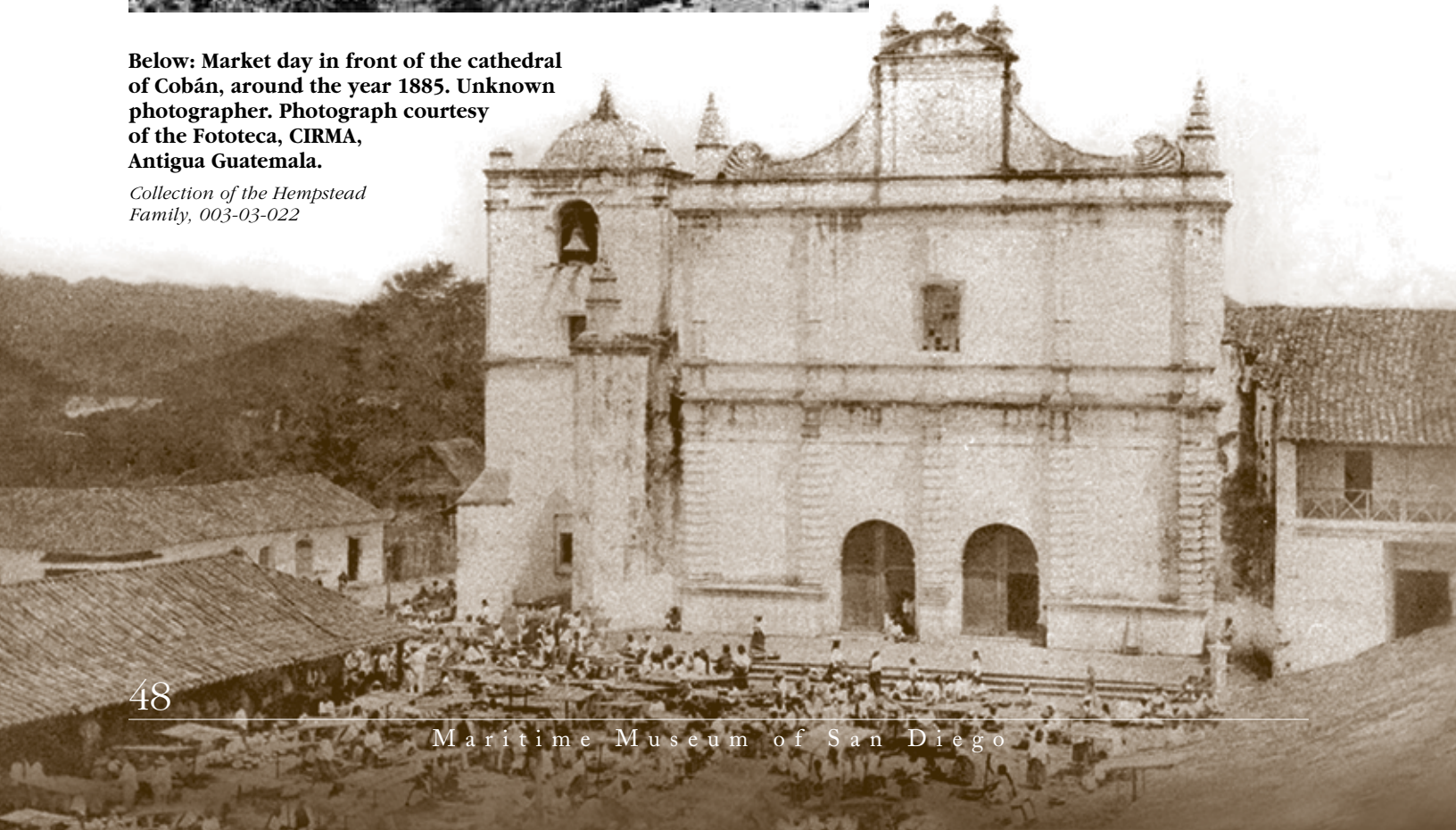
Left: Cobán, Alta Verapaz, 1928. Unknown photographer. Photograph courtesy of the Fototeca, CIRMA, Antigua Guatemala.

Collection of the Hempstead Family, 003-03-022



Below: Market day in front of the cathedral of Cobán, around the year 1885. Unknown photographer. Photograph courtesy of the Fototeca, CIRMA, Antigua Guatemala.

Collection of the Hempstead Family, 003-03-022



and residents, doubtless thinking ahead to the trip that *Procurador* Cabrera would make to Spain to present them to the Council of the Indies.⁸ The absence of this document in the case of Cabrillo is remarkable because his widow, heirs and grandchildren were litigious and presented many official transcripts of documents to back up their claims to *encomiendas* and agricultural lands. An early petition of this sort would normally have been copied on numerous occasions and included in the paperwork submitted by his children.

One can only surmise that before Cabrillo traveled to Spain, such a proof of merit and services was never prepared or was not widely circulated, which is not surprising.⁹ While back in Spain, he remained for less than a year to get married, establish commercial relations with his father-in-law, buy supplies for the shipyards, and petition for favors and exemptions from the Crown. The trappings of wealth, the gold that he transported, the recounting of the long years of service in the Indies, and his obvious success as an *encomendero* would have spoken their own language in the fevered atmosphere of the bustling port city of Seville, where many sought reinvention. In that sense, Cabrillo had correctly posited that if he presented himself in person, he could submit his requests directly to the Royal authorities, which he did with great success. In contrast, the process to draw up written documents, either in Guatemala or Spain, would have been less beneficial, and even a waste of time, if Cabrillo had not been able to demonstrate a high social position in the Old World, or present letters of nobility for his relatives.¹⁰ In addition, the entire process, even if focused solely on his exploits in New Spain and Guatemala, could have been counterproductive and could have caused undesired effects.

As an example of just such a situation, one need look no further than the proof of merit and services

A Spanish gentleman depicted in Christoph Weiditz's *Trachtenbuch*, 1520s. While clearly not of noble birth, Cabrillo had forged an identity in the New World that gave him access to wealth, reputation and influence. On various occasions Cabrillo chose to strategically define his identity by referring to his different professions and origins according to the circumstances in which he found himself.

Courtesy Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg



dated in 1531 for his brother-in-law, Diego Sánchez de Ortega, which is rather lackluster and spare on the sort of information that would bolster a claimant's petition for rewards. In lieu of his presence at court, however, some sort of paper testimony would have been better than nothing at all. Sánchez de Ortega presented no information dating from prior to the conquest of Mexico, and his witnesses were of poor quality: of his seven witnesses, three were illiterate and did not know how to sign their own name. In addition, Juan Márquez, who had known him the longest, in response to the question about Sánchez de Ortega's services in

Mexico – especially the impressive claim made by Diego that while he served in Michoacán, Mexico, “he had been the commander of a company of crossbowmen,” replied simply: “that he did not remember his having been in charge of a group of crossbowmen.”¹¹ With cooperation between the Spaniards lacking to such a degree, it is understandable that Cabrillo at this juncture might have wanted to avoid presenting a similar type of indifferent report, which could even have harmed his cause, in case other conquistadors proved recalcitrant to back up his claims or were merely victims of unreliable memory.

Another example worth citing is that of one of Cabrillo's contemporaries: a fellow resident of Guatemala who traveled from Veracruz to Spain and who did take the trouble while there in 1532 to return to Jerez de la Frontera - his place of origin - to prepare a proof of merit with a questionnaire about his parents and grandparents and the royal privileges that they enjoyed,

with ample testimony that they were “sons of noblemen from a known lineage.”¹² It is likely that Cabrillo could not make a similar claim either to be an *hidalgo* or an old Christian, and therefore he would have been unable

to prove any such claim in his town of birth, Palma del Río. Could he have belonged to one of the groups that was prohibited from traveling to and settling in the New World: the Jews and the Moors? If so, lacking the requisite distinguished lineage, did he correctly judge that it was better to avoid paperwork in which it would be common practice to mention one’s origins?¹³

In fact, it seems that Cabrillo did not visit his birthplace in 1532 and that by that time, all family ties with Palma had been severed, the family having moved to Seville or elsewhere. With the official historian of Palma del Río, Manuel Muñoz, we performed a quick review of the historical documents kept at the *Archivo de Protocolos Notariales* in the town of Posadas, where the information on public scribes from the city of Palma between 1526 and 1899 is housed. No document was found among the existing papers from the year 1532,

either drawn up by or related to Cabrillo. Although he was now a wealthy man, there is no evidence that he participated in any document sworn before a notary of Palma del Río during his brief tenure in Spain in 1532.

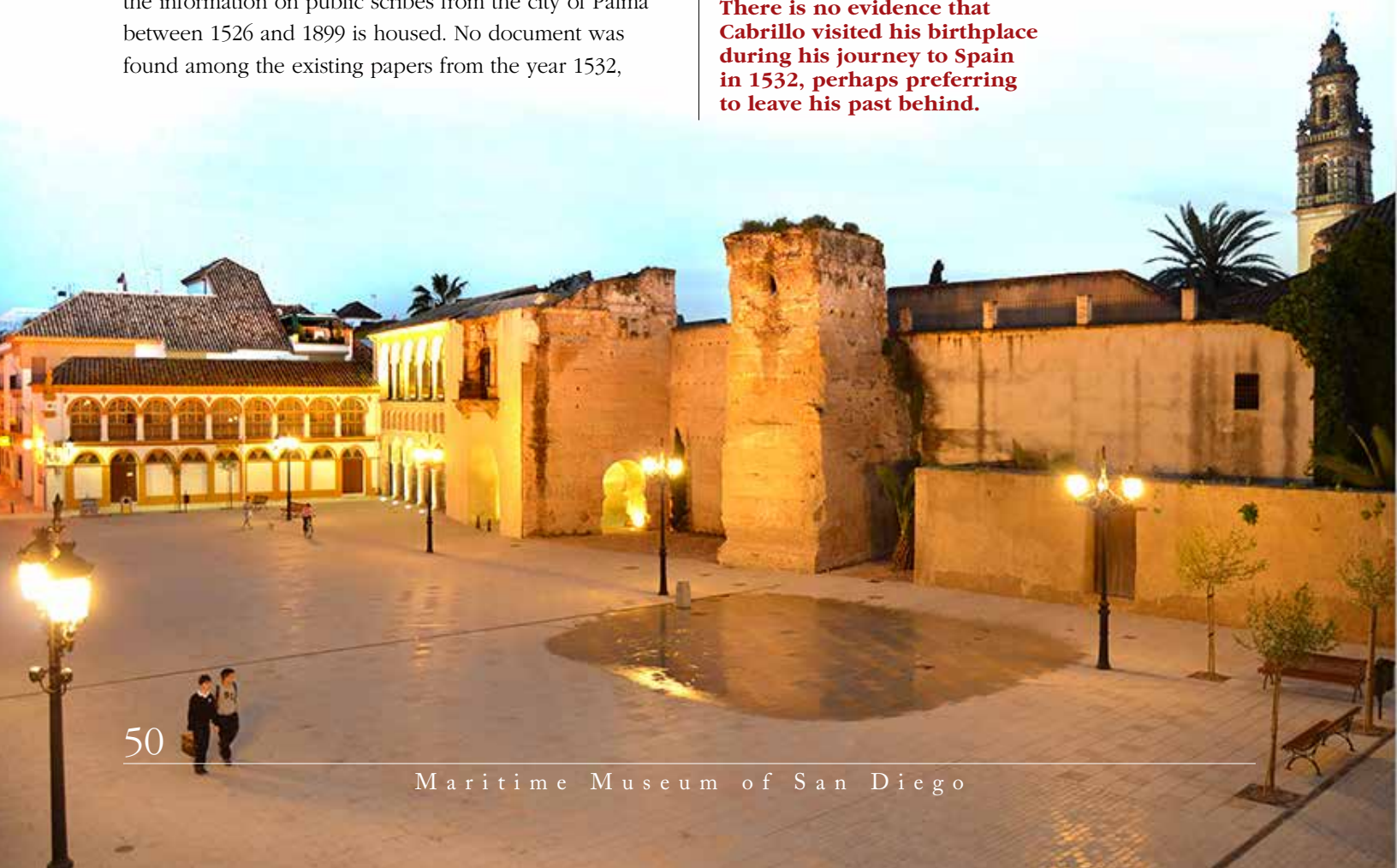
Cabrillo and his brother-in-law shared half of the *encomienda*, while Sancho de Barahona held the other half, as witnessed by his extant grant, dated in February 1529 and signed by Pedro de Alvarado’s brother, Jorge.

Encomiendas and Mines

The earliest dependable information related to mines worked by Cabrillo and his partner Sánchez de Ortega was a notice in the first Town Council book of Santiago de Guatemala dated in early October 1529.¹⁴ The

Town Council had ruled: “The residents (*vecinos*) are prohibited from going to the mines to search for gold.” This was due to mounting Indigenous uprisings against their new Spanish overlords, which necessitated the presence of the *vecinos*, armed and ready to defend the

Modern-day Palma del Río. There is no evidence that Cabrillo visited his birthplace during his journey to Spain in 1532, perhaps preferring to leave his past behind.



Spanish city, as well as a force prepared to head out to the countryside to the areas in open rebellion. The fine for disobeying this order was 100 gold *pesos* and loss of their *encomiendas*. Three days after this edict, on October 11, 1529, Diego Sánchez de Ortega presented a petition in which he asked for license to mine for gold and thus an exemption from military service. The Town Council ruled: “They agreed that as it would be charitable, and in consideration for having served His Majesty very well, and because in serving His Majesty he lost an arm and became indebted, he was given license to travel with his men until the first Christmas.”¹⁵ This may have been a particularly rich deposit of ore and perhaps that was another reason why the Town Council decided to waive their earlier prohibition in this case, to refrain from hindering such a promising deposit from being mined: proof of this is that just two years later, his partner Cabrillo left for Spain with a considerable amount of gold.

Most reports about the granting of the *encomienda* of Cobán to Cabrillo and his brother-in-law indicated that it took place in 1529, when Diego de Alvarado, the cousin of Pedro de Alvarado, the conquistador of Guatemala, led a group of approximately 100 men to the region to found a city called San Jorge.¹⁶ Cabrillo and his brother-in-law shared half of the *encomienda*, while Sancho de Barahona held the other half, as witnessed by his extant grant, dated in February 1529 and signed by Pedro de Alvarado’s brother, Jorge. It is believed that the motive for the conquering campaign to Cobán and the founding of a city was precisely to locate and exploit the rich gold placers in the region.¹⁷

Possibly the *encomenderos* received an informal grant of Cobán from Pedro de Alvarado in 1526. An Indigenous witness for Sancho de Barahona declared that he was previously Alvarado’s slave, “won in the war,” then he became Barahona’s slave and

witnessed that the “Indians from Cobán” were granted in *encomienda*.¹⁸ Alvarado sent a Spaniard to fetch the Indigenous authorities (*caciques y principales*) from Cobán to come to the city and be granted to the *encomendero*. Shortly after, the *encomendero* went to the town and stayed there for several days.¹⁹ Fellow conqueror Juan



Pedro de Alvarado, the mercurial conqueror of Guatemala. In the mid-to-late 1520s, Alvarado granted the town of Cobán to Cabrillo and Diego Sánchez in a ceremony in the city of Santiago de Guatemala.

1530 was an official confirmation of the holding of the *encomienda* on Alvarado’s return. Meanwhile, Sancho de Barahona had his *encomienda* of half of Cobán reconfirmed by Pedro de Alvarado in February 1536.

The only extant *encomienda* grant for Cobán in Cabrillo’s name was dated in Santiago de Guatemala and signed by Pedro de Alvarado on March 31, 1540.²¹ This grant was extended as a direct result of the death of his brother-in-law Diego Sánchez de Ortega and included the town of Jocopila (Xocotenango).²² It is likely that Alvarado sought to reward his shipwright and legalize the grey

Pérez Dardón witnessed the ceremony that took place in the city of Santiago de Guatemala, in which Pedro de Alvarado officially granted the town of Cobán to Cabrillo and Diego Sánchez, and declared to the *caciques* and *principales* present in his house, “obey this master here, serve him and he will treat you very well, and the possession of the town of Cobán was given to the aforementioned Juan Rodriguez ... and to Diego Sanchez de Ortega, his future brother-in-law.”²⁰ This ceremony may have taken place prior to August 1526, when Alvarado was still in Guatemala before his departure to Spain, or after his return in April 1530. Another possibility is that Cabrillo and his partner actually received their half when Alvarado was away, and the ceremony in

area in which the partnership sharing the *encomienda* had operated and the fact that Cabrillo may not have held an official title for the town of Cobán.²³ The inheritance by a brother-in-law of an *encomienda* was unusual and reflected the special partnership between the two men, the fact that Sánchez de Ortega had left neither a widow nor any legitimate children, and also the power that Alvarado had to manipulate the terms governing the *encomienda*.²⁴

In the early stages of the *encomienda*, the Maya-Q'eqchi of Cobán brought tribute and worked as servants for the *encomenderos* in the city, working their agricultural lands, cornfields and settlements on the outskirts of Santiago de Guatemala. Tribute items from Cobán included jade, incense, honey, dead birds called “xintotol” whose feathers were highly prized, chicken, corn and chilis. Cabrillo’s *encomienda* provided pitch used for caulking the ships that he built in the mid-1530s; Francisco de Torres testified

that “the Indians [from Cobán] served by taking supplies to the mines and by transporting pitch for a ship that the said Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was building.”²⁵

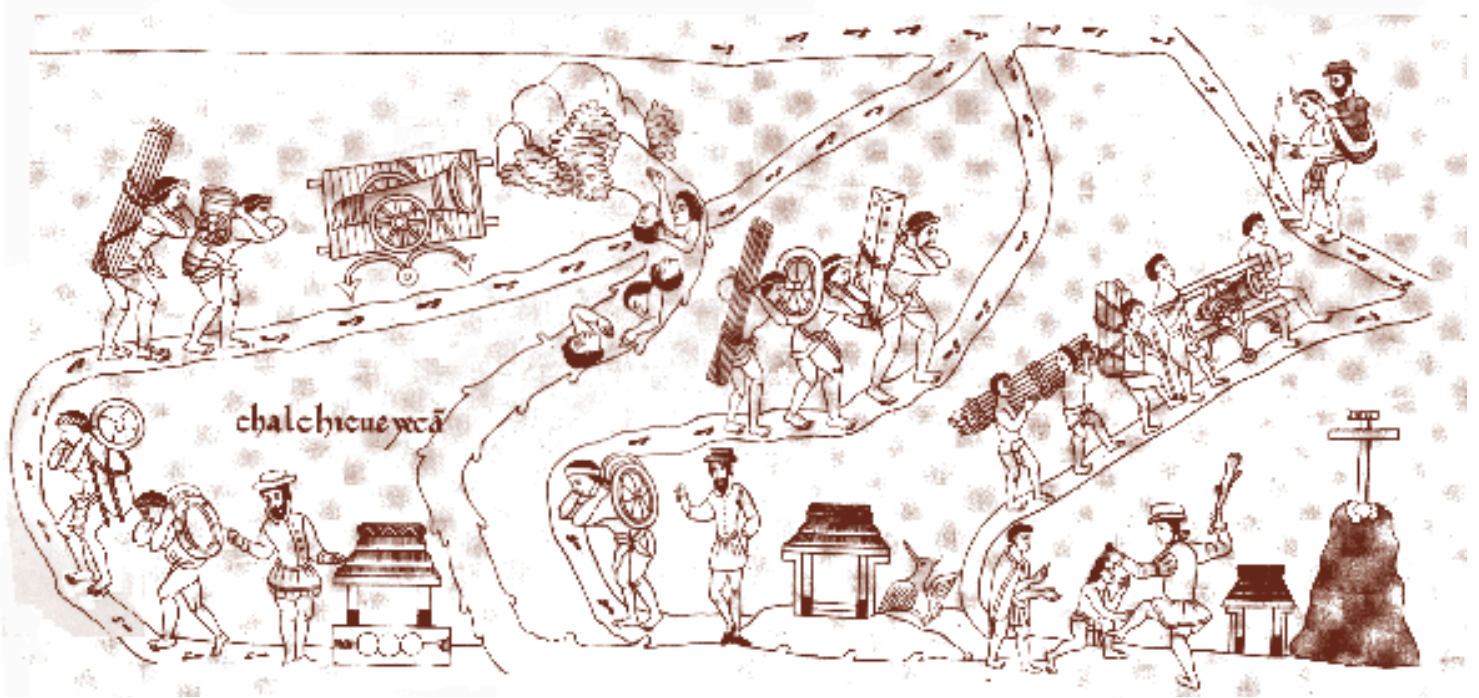
Encomenderos generally spent part of the year living on their *encomiendas* and exploited the nearby mines with large gangs of eighty or more Indigenous slaves. The “*indios de encomienda*” (*encomienda* Indians) traveled back and forth to the mines providing food and clothing for the gangs of slaves. For every worker panning for gold, three or four more were needed to carry supplies, prepare food, and manage the living quarters. The mines were close to modern day Rabinal (a city and municipality in the Department of Baja Verapaz) and the Uspantlán River.²⁶ There were reports of frequent uprisings in the region of the mines, in which Spanish and Indigenous overseers and miners were killed. In May 1531,

In 1537, the region around Cobán - a town that had been granted to Cabrillo by Alvarado - was ceded to the Dominicans under the leadership of Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, pictured here. The intent was to convert the inhabitants by peaceful means, and the use of armed conquest was officially forbidden. Circumstances permitted Alvarado to disregard this agreement, and Cabrillo and his descendants continued to claim the *encomienda*.



conqueror Diego de Rojas testified that “it is public knowledge and known to all that near the mines, certain towns rebelled ... and that one of those is called Jilotepeque and the other Chiquimula and another is Cobán and another Coyutla and that in Jilotepeque they killed three Spaniards.”²⁷ It is possible that effective control of the *encomenderos* over the services and manpower of Cobán only lasted some five or six years in total.²⁸ There is evidence that the inhabitants of Cobán stopped serving their *encomenderos* in the late 1530s.

Cobán was in the region referred to as the “land of war” and also called Teculutlán, the place of the owls in Nahuatl, and dating from 1537, was not to be granted to private *encomenderos*. According to the terms of the contract signed by the Dominicans under Fray Bartolomé de las Casas (officially appointed as Universal Protector of the Indians) with the acting Governor, *licentiate* Alonso Maldonado, the pacification of that region was ceded as part of an experiment in peaceful conquest. In 1540, however, Alvarado still considered Cobán his jurisdiction and had little respect for agreements made in his absence. At the time, Las Casas was on his way back to Spain to plead for strict laws to prevent the mistreatment of the Indigenous peoples. The peaceful conquest of the area had been temporarily suspended, and Maldonado had returned to Mexico, so Alvarado proceeded unhindered with his



allocation of a new *encomienda* grant to Cabrillo for the town of Cobán.²⁹ Later Cabrillo's son and heir was involved in a legal dispute over the loss of Cobán which dragged on until 1567, when he eventually settled with the Crown; in return for 400 *pesos de minas* per year for two generations, he agreed to desist from all further actions and claims to Cobán.³⁰

The exploitation of mines using the manpower and resources of Cabrillo's *encomienda* of Cobán provided financing for his return voyage to Spain after only a two-year period of intense activity in the mines of Rabinal and Uspantlán, if we date the discovery of the deposits of gold from the October 1529 notice in the first Town Council book. Even if tribute and personal service contributions from Cobán were intermittent after the early 1530s, Cabrillo and his brother-in-law held other towns in *encomienda* and Indigenous slaves and were not solely reliant on the proceeds and manpower from Cobán. After Cabrillo's return from Spain in 1533, they also had the beginnings of a shipbuilding empire, no doubt in association with father-in-law, Alonso Sánchez de Ortega. Cabrillo and

Cabrillo and his business partners relied heavily on the use of Indigenous slaves. In effect the entire Spanish colonial economy could not have functioned without the assistance of this type of resource. The Spaniards' use of native labor is vividly illustrated in the mid-sixteenth-century *Tlaxcala Lienzo*.

The “indios de encomienda” (encomienda Indians) traveled back and forth to the mines providing food and clothing for the gangs of slaves. For every worker panning for gold, three or four more were needed to carry supplies, prepare food, and manage the living quarters.

his brother-in-law may have had hundreds of Indigenous slaves and there is evidence that some were sold before he left for Mexico in 1540.³¹

Other *encomiendas* held by Cabrillo and his partner were the towns of Xicalapa, Comitlán and Jocopila (Xocotenango). Initially these towns were held by Diego Sánchez de Ortega and had been granted to him by Jorge de Alvarado prior to 1530. The earliest recorded tribute assessment for the cocoa-producing town on the south coast, Xicalapa, was on March 24, 1538, and stated:

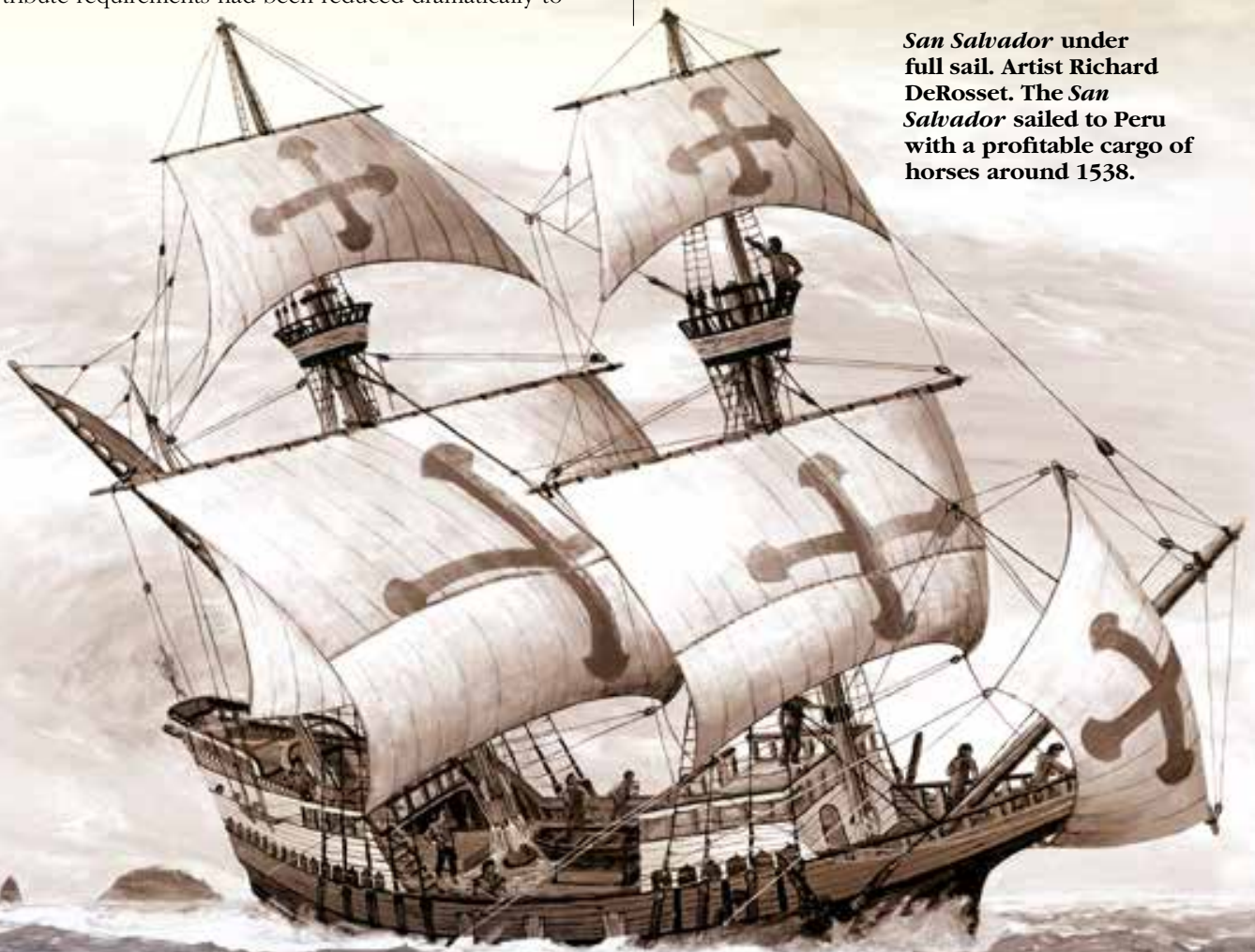
In the town of Xicalapa ... given as an *encomienda* to Juan Rodríguez ... it was ordered that they [the Indians] should give their *encomendero* 400 *xiquipiles* of cocoa beans wrapped up in their *petates* and that they should not take it to any other place but

rather, the *encomendero* would look for someone to transport it. They must not give more nor may their *encomendero* demand more nor take more on pain of the punishment described in the first tribute assessment: there must be 500 *xiquipiles* in the town because the Indians wish it to be so.³²

Six years later, on February 27, 1544, Cabrillo's widow Beatriz Sánchez de Ortega sold 500 "*xiquipiles de cacao*" from the town of Xicalapa with each *xiquipil* comprising 8,000 grains of good cocoa. She received 568 gold *pesos* for the sale.³³ By 1549, at the time of a country-wide *tasación* carried out by President Alonso López de Cerrato of the Audiencia de los Confines, which later became the Audiencia de Guatemala, the town of Xicalapa, held by the "younger sons" of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, consisted of sixty heads of household, and the tribute requirements had been reduced dramatically to

250 *xiquipiles* of cacao per year, plus twelve "Indians to work as servants, who would help him to fish in the sea that is next to that town, three days a week." Five years later the amount of tribute dropped further to 165 *xiquipiles*, and then in 1560, down to only 144 - striking testimony of the plummeting Indigenous population from epidemic disease in the sixteenth century. A similar fate befell the population of the other towns, Comitlán and Jocopila, with Jocopila recorded as having 120 heads of household (*tributarios*) in 1549 and only fifty-five by 1564.³⁴ Comitlán was smaller than the other two towns, and in 1564 was registered as having only twenty *tributarios*. Witnesses declared that "the said Indians from Comitlán and Xocopila were worth much more than they are worth now, as it appears in their tribute assessments."³⁵

San Salvador under full sail. Artist Richard DeRosset. The *San Salvador* sailed to Peru with a profitable cargo of horses around 1538.



Cabrillo's son and heir, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo de Medrano, held Xicalapa, Jocopila and Comitlán until these towns were inherited by his heir, Alonso de Medrano. Upon his death, the towns went to his brother Jerónimo Cabrillo de Aldana, who in 1615 relinquished Xicalapa, which at that time consisted of only four *tributarios* paying two *xiquipiles* of cocoa beans.³⁶ There is a record of various enterprises over the years by the Cabrillo family on lands that they owned near Xicalapa: "a farm with livestock, with mares, mules and other animals" and an "operation to manufacture indigo dye."³⁷ Throughout the late sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century, Cabrillo's grandchildren and great-grandchildren were granted *encomiendas* and "allowances" in towns in Guatemala, Chiapas and Honduras, always in recognition of the services provided by Cabrillo to the Spanish Crown.³⁸

Meanwhile, residential lots and agricultural lands in the city were mortgaged or sold by family members as their fortunes declined over time. As early as 1544, Cabrillo's widow Beatriz Sánchez de Ortega was involved in a dispute, which she lost and appealed, with her husband's son-in-law Juan de la Calle, who lived in Gracias a Dios and was married to one of Cabrillo's three daughters from an earlier relationship. There is also documentation about a mortgage and loans that Beatriz took out on "two pairs of houses, each next to each other in this city, one Black slave and six Indian slaves, three men and three women."³⁹

An additional *encomienda* grant dated on December 20, 1540 in the Port of Colima in Mexico, and signed by Pedro de Alvarado, was for the towns of Jumaytepeque and Tacuba. News had just reached them in Mexico regarding the death of the former *encomendero*, and Alvarado lost no time rewarding his captain, hoping to discharge some of his debt to Cabrillo.⁴⁰ The grant was secured with the assistance of Bishop Marroquín, but neither Cabrillo nor his heirs were able to gain access to these towns as they were almost simultaneously granted in

encomienda in Santiago de Guatemala by Alvarado's lieutenant governor, don Francisco de la Cueva, to himself. Years of unsuccessful litigation dragged on between Cabrillo's heirs and don Francisco de la Cueva and others over these two towns.⁴¹

Cabrillo: merchant and shipwright

Upon his return to Santiago de Guatemala in 1533, Cabrillo settled his household with his new Spanish bride, who bore him two sons, one his namesake and the other

named after his brother-in-law, Diego Sánchez de Ortega.⁴² A problematic involvement with, yet apparent loyalty to, Pedro de Alvarado persisted. It appears that Cabrillo was involved in some aspect of Governor Alvarado's ill-fated Peruvian armada, as his name is recorded on the muster list dated in Nicaragua in January, 1534, though evidently he had

made his way back to Guatemala long before Alvarado. In the spring of 1535, Cabrillo prepared a ship he had just built, the *Santiago*, in the Port of Acajutla, to voyage to Peru under master Domingo del Castillo, with ten horses and other provisions to sell. Alvarado arrived at the same port after his disastrous journey to Peru, where he had tried unsuccessfully to muscle in on the Inca treasures claimed by Pizarro and Almagro, and immediately seized Cabrillo's ship by force and, against his will, sent it off to the *Mar del Sur*. Cabrillo protested the lost revenue to Governor Maldonado in 1535, citing that each horse would have fetched between 1,200 and 1,300 pesos in the Peruvian market. Some two years later, Cabrillo sought reparations with Governor Maldonado; the ship was returned to him in a deplorable state, and eventually, a few years later, he ended up selling it for very little to Alvarado.⁴³

Despite the altercation with Alvarado over the theft of the *Santiago*, Cabrillo accompanied him to Honduras in 1536, took part in incursions there, and registered as a resident and *encomendero* in Gracias a Dios under his full name, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo. Alvarado granted

The grant was secured with the assistance of Bishop Marroquín, but neither Cabrillo nor his heirs were able to gain access to these towns as they were almost simultaneously granted in *encomienda* in Santiago de Guatemala by Alvarado's lieutenant governor, don Francisco de la Cueva, to himself.

him the towns of Teota and Cotela.⁴⁴ Little to nothing is known about those *encomiendas* or the length of time Cabrillo was involved with Alvarado's attempt to settle Honduras, but one of his daughters may have made her home there.⁴⁵ Alvarado departed for Spain in August 1536, leaving Cabrillo in charge of the shipyard and shipbuilding enterprise for his next armada and appointing him as local administrative officer (*justicia mayor*) of Acajutla.⁴⁶

Cabrillo entered into negotiations with others to trade with Peru and sent ships with cargo and horses to sell after Alvarado's departure. Ship captain Ginoves [or Ginés] de Mafra testified in 1541 that Cabrillo had built the *San Salvador* and that: "this witness saw that the said Juan Rodríguez had the said ship and owned it and paid for it and this witness saw him make a voyage to Peru."⁴⁷ This voyage to Peru with the *San Salvador* would have provided Cabrillo with a considerable profit, as horses were worth a great deal more there than in Guatemala.⁴⁸ The first reference to the *San Salvador* is from a notarial record of scribe Luis Pérez dating from 1538, perhaps from the month of January, as all the entries from that scribe are from that year and there are two other documents signed

by Cabrillo both written in January, before that very notary. This undated document stated the following:

Juan Rodríguez, a resident of the city of Santiago, owner of the ship called *San Salvador*, which was at the port of Iztapa, contracted Juan Gómez Camacho to take this ship to the region of Peru, with four horses, and with a Spaniard and a Black slave to care for them, four saddles, four lances and four dozen horseshoes. Juan Rodríguez also agreed to prepare the ship with all necessary supplies for the voyage.⁴⁹

The other two documents in the same records of scribe Luis Pérez were both dated in January 1538 and signed by Cabrillo.

One of them was a power of attorney to master Juan Cansino dated January 17, to use Cabrillo's ship, the *San Juan*, docked in Iztapa, "to make voyages and transport goods."⁵⁰ The other document refers to a partnership or joint enterprise between Cabrillo and Pedro Hernández Picón, dated January 9, to take nine of Cabrillo's horses that were near the Lempa River in Cabrillo's ship to sell in Peru. Unfortunately, the ship's name was not mentioned in the documents relating to this transaction. In addition, Hernández Picón had to take an unspecified

item that Andrés de Ulloa would bring to the port of Lempa.⁵¹ We know from other sources that Ulloa was married to one of Cabrillo's daughters.

The mention of the port at the Lempa River may have referred to the site called Giribaltique, which was on the bay of Jiquilisco where the shipyard was located. This was the place where Alvarado used to "careen the ships" from both of

It was perhaps inevitable that Cabrillo would be seconded to serve as Admiral at the head of the armada because the restless and tyrannical Alvarado wanted him to do so.



A seventeenth-century sketch of the Guatemalan coastline near Iztapa, showing the Michatoya River and the Spanish shipyard at Gibaltique (Giribaltique).

Courtesy Huntington Library

his armadas: the one he sent to Peru and the one he had planned to sail to the Molucas. The town of San Miguel in El Salvador was a short distance from Giribaltique.⁵² Alvarado referred to this port in a letter sent in November 1535 to the Crown:

[A] very good, safe and navigable port has been discovered at the mouth of the Lempa River, where a *villa* called San Miguel has been settled, where all the ships that come to port will be able to get their provisions, and they may careen their hulls and load up, and in this way, it will be easy to communicate the northern and southern seas and it will be of great benefit if something is discovered because of this.⁵³

The same port was mentioned by one of the crew, Francisco Vargas, who went to California with Cabrillo:

[T]his witness saw Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo in Iztapa, building the said armada and he went with the armada to careen the ships at the shipyard in Giribaltique and [this witness] saw him embark with the aforesaid adelantado [Alvarado] in the armada and admiral-ship (*capitana*) for the aforesaid discovery and Juan Rodríguez went as admiral of the fleet with one of his own ships, that he brought at his own expense.⁵⁴

From his base at the shipyard in Iztapa, Cabrillo continued to be involved in numerous business enterprises from 1535 until 1540. He was trading with Peru and sending horses to be sold there, while he maintained contact with his home in Santiago de Guatemala, where he had his family, mines and *encomiendas*. It is probable that he continued to operate in the region of Honduras where he had a daughter and son-in-law and other *encomiendas*. In Honduras he would also have access to the port, Puerto de Caballos, where Governor Alvarado arrived in 1539 from Spain “with huge supplies of sails, rigging, ironwork, anchors, and other materials for the fleet.”⁵⁵ It was perhaps inevitable that Cabrillo would be seconded to serve as Admiral at the head of the armada because the restless and tyrannical Alvarado wanted him to do so. Cabrillo had built seven or eight of the ships, and would have been owed so much money that it was expedient for him to follow his fortune to Mexico with Alvarado.

Notes

- 1 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 30-35. Bernal Díaz del Castillo recounted that Cabrillo was in charge of harvesting the resin used for caulking the ships.
- 2 AGI, Patronato 87, N.2, R.4, Información de los méritos y servicios del general Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, 1618, img. 78.
- 3 Sancho de Barahona received half of Santiago Atilán and Cobán; Juan de Espinar received the *encomienda* of Huehuetenango.
- 4 Woodrow Borah, *Early Colonial Trade and Navigation between Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954), 8-9. Emigration from Mexico City to Central America, Peru, and back to Spain continued at a rising rate throughout the early 1530s. Borah notes that there were far more conquerors than *encomiendas*.
- 5 Barahona served as *alcalde* in 1535 and Espinar was named *procurador* in 1536. See Kramer and Luján Muñoz, eds., *Libro Segundo del Cabildo*, 129-130, 159. Barahona served as *procurador* in 1527 and Espinar served as *regidor* in 1530. See Sáenz de Santa María and Deola de Girón, *Libro Viejo*, 27, 150. Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo de Medrano served as *alcalde* in 1577. See AGCA, A1.2.2. Leg.1770, Exp.11764, “Libro Séptimo de Cabildos desta cibdad (de Guatemala) desde 1577 hasta 1588 años.”
- 6 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 50-51.
- 7 For a discussion of social climbing and disdain for manual labor and “repetitive tasks” among the conquistadors of Guatemala, see Pilar Sanchíz Ochoa, *Los Hidalgos de Guatemala: Realidad y apariencia en un sistema de valores* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 1976), 31-32, 137. At different times, Alvarado won two horses and 4,000 *pesos* from Juan de Espinar. AGI, Justicia 295, Residencia de Pedro de Alvarado, 1537-1541, fols. 199, 226, 395.
- 8 AGI, Patronato 54, R.7, N. 7, Probanza de Luis de Vivar, 18 de julio, 1531; Guatemala 110, N. 8, Probanza a pedimiento de don Pedro Puertocarrero, 28 de julio, 1531; Guatemala 110, N. 10, Probanza hecha a pedimiento de Marco Ruiz, 16 de agosto, 1531; Guatemala 110, N. 5, Probanza hecha *ad perpetuam rei memoriam* a pedimiento de Hernán Méndez, 23 de mayo, 1531.
- 9 Murdo MacLeod noted that the small communities of conquistadors knew each other well, which made it quite difficult to hide or change their true origins in the Old World, and an enjoyment of “spreading malicious rumors” about their companions-at-arms kept these relations “reasonably honest.” See Murdo J. MacLeod, “Self-promotion: The *Relaciones de Méritos y Servicios* and their Historical and Political Interpretation,” *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 7:1 (1998), 28-29.

- 10 The “desire for nobility” and “eagerness to be a noble” that characterized people in peninsular Spain were reproduced to some degree in Guatemala, and many people aspired to reach “the highest echelons of nobility, the [positions] occupied by the *hidalgos*.” See Sanchíz Ochoa, *Los Hidalgos de Guatemala*, 37-42.
- 11 AGI, Guatemala 110, N.9, Informaciones de oficio y parte: Diego Sánchez de Ortega, conquistador y pacificador de: México, provincia de Colima, Panuco, Mechoacán, Guatemala, y encomendero de Xucotenango, Acatenango y Cobán, vecino de Santiago (Guatemala), 28 de julio, 1531.
- 12 AGI, Guatemala 115, N. 42, Probanza cerrada y sellada de Diego Sánchez de Santiago, Jerez de la Frontera, 22 de mayo, 1532.
- 13 In 1501, the Catholic Monarchs prohibited “Jews and Moors, heretics or reconciled, or persons who have recently converted to our faith” from traveling to the Indies, and in 1513 they extended the prohibition such that Moors already in those lands could not hold *encomiendas*. See Hernán G. H. Taboada, “El moro en las Indias,” *Latinoamérica* 39 (México 2004/2), 115-132.
- 14 There is an earlier reference to a Diego Sánchez in the first *Libro del Cabildo*, but it is not certain that this referred to Diego Sánchez de Ortega as there were three men called Diego Sánchez in Guatemala at this time.
- 15 Sáenz de Santa María and Deola de Girón, *Libro Viejo*, 137.
- 16 Unfortunately, the *encomienda* grant for Cabrillo and his partner has not been found.
- 17 Kelsey noted that not much is known about the expedition led by Diego de Alvarado; *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 50. Diego de Alvarado and his army, “returned in very bad shape and in need,” on April 14, 1531 to Santiago from an unsuccessful attempt to found and settle a city near Cobán. See Kramer and Luján Muñoz, eds., *Libro Segundo del Cabildo*, 27-28.
- 18 Pedro de Alvarado awarded the *encomienda* of Cobán when he was in Utatlán, the capital of the kingdom of the Maya K’iche’.
- 19 AGI, Justicia 290, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo con el fiscal sobre Cobán y Jocotenango, 1563-1567, testimony of Andrés Pérez.
- 20 Ibid., testimony of Juan Pérez Dardón.
- 21 AGI, Justicia 286, N.4, R.2, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, vecino de Santiago de Guatemala contra Francisco de la Cueva, 1542-1568, fols. 3-5.
- 22 Kramer, *Encomienda Politics*, 156.
- 23 AGI, Justicia 290, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo con el fiscal sobre Cobán y Jocotenango, fol. 4. In the questionnaire they note that Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was given the *encomienda* in March 1540 because “half of the Indians had fallen vacant with the death of Diego Sánchez de Ortega and so he was given a new grant.”
- 24 Diego Sánchez de Ortega wrote that he held Xocotenango, Acatenango and half of Cobán in 1531.
- His sharing of one half of the *encomienda* with Cabrillo may have been an informal arrangement between the two men. There were other examples of partnerships of this kind in Guatemala where two men shared *encomiendas*, while only one held title to it. AGI, Guatemala 110, N.9, Informaciones de oficio y parte: Diego Sánchez de Ortega, img. 3.
- 25 AGI, Justicia 290, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo con el fiscal sobre Cobán y Jocotenango, img. 74, testimony of Francisco de Torres. Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 68.
- 26 Kelsey described the functioning of the *encomienda* in detail; see *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 51-53. Although he noted that much of his narrative is speculation, there is nonetheless evidence that the *encomenderos* were actively involved in the exploitation of mines near Cobán.
- 27 AGI, Guatemala 110, N.5, Probanza hecha *ad perpetuan rei memoriam* a pedimiento de Hernan Mendez, 1531. Coyutla might be another name for modern day San Cristóbal Verapaz, not far from the city of Cobán.
- 28 See the testimony given by Juan Pérez Dardon, in André Saint-Lu, *La Vera Paz, Esprit évangélique et colonisation* (Paris: Centre de Recherches Hispaniques, 1968), 528.
- 29 AGI, Guatemala 110, N.9, Informaciones de oficio y parte: Diego Sánchez de Ortega. For a description and analysis of the dispute over the town of Cobán, see Saint-Lu, *La Vera Paz*, 94-105, 519-536.
- 30 AGI, Patronato 182, R.28, Escritura de renuncia, otorgada a favor de Su Majestad por Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, del repartimiento de indios del pueblo de Cobán, en Guatemala, 1567; Patronato 291, R.94, Real Provisión de receptoría a petición del fiscal Jerónimo de Ulloa en el pleito que trata con Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, vecino de la ciudad de Santiago de Guatemala, sobre el pueblo de Cobán, 19 de junio, 1566.
- 31 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 58-59.
- 32 A *xiquipil* is equal to 8,000 grains of cocoa. A *petate* is a grass mat. AGI, Justicia 290, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo con el fiscal sobre Cobán y Jocotenango, 1563-1567, fol.100.
- 33 Juan José Falla, *Extractos de Escrituras Públicas, 1543-1659*, II (Guatemala: Editorial Amigos del País, 1996), 370.
- 34 Jocopila was also referred to as Aguacatlán and Xocotenango.
- 35 AGI, Patronato 87, N.2, R.4, Información de los méritos y servicios del general Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, 1618. AGI, Justicia 290, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo con el fiscal sobre Cobán y Jocotenango, fol. 104.
- 36 AGI, Guatemala 97, N.37, Antonio de Zerpa Espino sobre que se le dé confirmación de una *encomienda* que le dió el Conde de la Gomera, 1616.

- 37 Juan José Falla, *Extractos de Escrituras Públicas, 1538-1657*, III (Guatemala: Editorial Amigos del País, 2001), 309, 314-315, 431. Jerónimo Cabrillo de Aldana, grandson, had an indigo dye factory on the coast of Xicalapa in the late 16th century. The land where they had their livestock was sold prior to 1602 and was part of Martín Lobo de Guzmán's estate: see AGCA, A1.20, Leg.430, Inmuebles de Martín Lobo de Guzmán, 1602, folio 314. In 1591, Cabrillo's son had construction carried out for his dye factory: see AGCA, A1.20, Leg. 438, exp.10004, Juan de Castellanos, maestro carpintero, es contratado por Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo de Medrano para la construcción de una rueda destinada a un obraje de añil, 1591.
- 38 AGCA, A3.2, Leg.1350, Exp.22569, Título de pensión para Isabel y Jerónima de Solórzano y Mazariegos, bisnietas de Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, 1665; A1.20, Leg.1032, Exp.9525, Testamento de Esteban de Medrano y Solórzano, hijo legítimo de Jerónimo Cabrillo de Aldana, 1668, folio 33; A1.20, Leg.685, Herederos de Jerónimo Cabrillo de Aldana, encomienda en Chiapas, 1628, fol. 366; A1.23, Leg.4576, Confirmación de encomiendas del nieto del capitán Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, pueblos en Chiapas, 1616, fol. 86; A1.39, Leg.1752, Exp.11737, Encomienda a favor de Alonso Cabrillo de Medrano en la jurisdicción de Gracias a Dios, 1592, fol. 35.
- 39 Although not much is known about this dispute with Beatriz Sánchez de Ortega, two of Cabrillo's sons-in-law were involved as Andrés de Ulloa served as Juan de la Calle's power of attorney in 1543. See Falla, *Extractos de Excrituras Públicas*, II, 369-370, 401, 511. AGCA, A1, Leg.5955, Exp.52154, Sobre solares y milpas de la ciudad, 1597. Doña Isabel de Aldana, widow of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo de Medrano, sold "houseplots and lands in the field of Santa Lucia, behind the Espiritu Santo" in 1597.
- 40 AGI, Justicia 286, N.4, R.2, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, vecino de Santiago de Guatemala contra Francisco de la Cueva, fols. 3-4.
- 41 Cabrillo's heirs were never successful at getting their grant recognized. AGI, Justicia 286, N.4, R.2, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, vecino de Santiago de Guatemala contra Francisco de la Cueva; Guatemala 110, Francisco de la Cueva sobre repartimiento de indios; Patronato 87, N.2, R.4, Información de los méritos y servicios del general Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo; Justicia 280, Beatriz Sánchez de Ortega viuda de Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo con Don Francisco de la Cueva sobre los indios del pueblo de Xumaytepeque, 1542-1550.
- 42 Notarial records are incomplete, and others disorganized in the Archive in Guatemala City, but parts of the book of scribe Luis Pérez from 1538 are intact and afford a glimpse of Cabrillo's activities in 1538. See AGCA, A1.20, Leg.732, Protocolo del Escribano Real Luis Pérez, 1538; Falla, *Extractos de Escrituras Públicas, 1538-1657*, III, 177-187.
- 43 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 71. AGI, Justicia 280, Beatriz Sánchez de Ortega viuda de Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo con don Francisco de la Cueva, fol.25.
- 44 AGI, Patronato 20, N.4, R.6, Testimonio de la fundación de la villa de San Pedro, en Honduras, que hizo el adelantado y gobernador de Guatemala, don Pedro de Alvarado, posesión que tomó de ella y repartimiento de la villa de Gracias a Dios, 20 de julio, 1536. Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 61-62.
- 45 Falla, *Extractos de Escrituras Públicas*, II, 401 and AGCA, A1, Leg.2196, Exp.15750, Los conquistadores que vinieron a la conquista de esta provincia con el adelantado don Pedro de Alvarado, capitán general, 23 de agosto, 1548.
- 46 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 62.
- 47 AGI, Justicia 280, Beatriz Sánchez de Ortega viuda de Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo con don Francisco de la Cueva, fol. 29. Alvarado claimed that Ginés de Mafra, piloto, "is one of the greatest men of this South Sea who is known today, because he traveled with Magallanes." AGI, Guatemala 9A, R.6, N.11 Carta de Pedro de Alvarado al Consejo de Indias, 20 de noviembre, 1536.
- 48 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 77. Kelsey noted that the profits from this trip could easily have helped pay for the cost of the *San Salvador*, which was 4,000 ducados.
- 49 Though the certificate of charter is missing the page with the date, all of the entries by Luis Pérez were dated 1538. AGCA, A1.20, Leg.732, Fletamiento del navío San Salvador a Juan Gómez Camacho, para viajes al Perú [1538], fol. 181v. Falla, *Extractos de Escrituras Públicas*, III, 185-187.
- 50 AGCA, A1.20, Leg.732, Poder que dio Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo a Juan Cansino para que fuera maestre del navío San Juan, 17 de enero, 1538, fols. 168r-169r. Falla, *Extractos de Escrituras Públicas*, III, 185.
- 51 AGCA, A1.20, Leg.732, Compañía de Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo y Pedro Hernández Picón para llevar nueve caballos del río de Lempa al Perú, 9 de enero, 1538, fols. 180v-181r. Falla, *Extractos de Escrituras Públicas*, III, 186-187.
- 52 José María Vallejo García-Hevia, *Juicio a un conquistador, Pedro de Alvarado: su proceso de residencia en Guatemala (1536-1538)*, (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2008), 380. In 1599, don Francisco de Castellanos relinquished the *encomienda* of the towns of Xirabaltique and Niquimongoya in the jurisdiction of the city of San Miguel, El Salvador; see AGI, Patronato 82, N.1, R.1 Probanza de los méritos y servicios de Jorge de Alvarado, 1598.
- 53 AGI, Guatemala 9A, R.6, N.11, Carta de Pedro de Alvarado al Consejo de Indias, 20 de noviembre, 1535.
- 54 AGI, Patronato 87, N.2, R.4, Información de los méritos y servicios del general Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, img. 52. See also Kelsey, who includes a seventeenth-century map of the shipyard of Girabaltique [sic]; Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 66-69.
- 55 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 70.

Chapter 4

From Guatemala to California 1542 -1543

Hundreds of years after Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo's 1542 expedition from Mexico along the coasts of Alta (upper) and Baja (lower) California, the navigator, shipwright, merchant, and conqueror would be a recognizable name far from his Guatemalan home, and even further from his place of birth, Palma del Río, Spain. More than sixty years after Cabrillo's death, because of a mistaken designation given to him by historian Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, his deeds would unwittingly be claimed by Portugal, a country with which he likely had no affiliation at all. Meanwhile, historical records that referenced Cabrillo's Andalusian origins remained archived in Spain and in Guatemala, and the people of Palma del Río were unaware of the trajectory of their native son until 2015.

In Point Loma, San Diego, there is a National Monument that bears Cabrillo's name; at its museum, there



The *San Salvador* constructed and launched by the Maritime Museum of San Diego on San Diego Bay.

Photographer George Adkins

are representations of living history, with actors wearing the garb of the times narrating the story of his voyage of exploration up the Pacific Coast. The government of Portugal donated a sculpture of Cabrillo in 1939 to the city of San Francisco, to form part of the Golden Gate International Exposition, but because it arrived

too late to be displayed, it was placed at Point Loma. Two versions of the same statue exist: the first one donated by Portugal was installed in Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico where it was unveiled in 2013, while in 1988 a new, more substantial sandstone replica had taken its place in San Diego.¹

There is also an important Maritime Museum that houses a replica of the ship he built and sailed to California, the *San Salvador*. The building of a full-size, sea-worthy replica of the *San Salvador*, directed by the Maritime Museum of San Diego and crafted by a team of skilled shipwrights and devoted volunteers, is a remarkable accomplishment.² This contrasts with the relative lack of awareness

A sixteenth-century European spice merchant. In the wake of the initial Spanish defeat of the Aztecs in the early 1520s, Hernán Cortés and other conquistadors turned their focus to the far side of the Pacific Ocean and the immense wealth that might be acquired in the Spice Islands of the Indonesian Archipelago. The quest for a maritime route to Asia across the Pacific would eventually give rise to the Cabrillo voyage of 1542.



of academics in Cabrillo's adopted land, Guatemala, where few know who he was or fail to acknowledge his historical relevance for their country. Inadvertently, I am the first person to link up three disparate threads of Cabrillo's life, from Palma del Río to Guatemala and then to California, where his story ended.³

California historians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were taken by the tale of Cabrillo's expedition, his tragic death during the voyage of discovery, and the heroic endeavors of his second-in-command Bartolomé Ferrer to continue reconnoitering the coast and to bring the vessels and crew safely back to Mexico.⁴ More recent

historians have added their research and writings to the story of Cabrillo, including his voyage on board the *San Salvador* from the Port of Navidad, Mexico to the coast of Upper California.⁵

The extant account of Cabrillo's voyage of exploration was a report based on testimony given by some of the surviving members of his crew.⁶ Despite the nature of this report, recorded some time after the voyage and not the ship's actual log (which has never been found), it is accepted as a fairly accurate account of the first Europeans to set foot on

More recent historians have added their research and writings to the story of Cabrillo, including his voyage on board the *San Salvador* from the Port of Navidad, Mexico to the coast of Upper California.⁵

the shores of California.

The story of that expedition begins with the story of the conquest of Mexico. The Aztec treasure was divided up after subjugation in the early 1520s, and Captain Hernán Cortés had reason to imagine that further riches waited to

be discovered that would rival the spoils of New Spain. To that end, he commenced shipbuilding on the Pacific coast with rigging and gear brought overland from the port of Veracruz. Further impetus for exploration northward came with the arrival of royal orders to find a westward passage to the Moluccas to strengthen Spanish claims to the Spice Islands.⁷ It is believed that Cortés was seeking not only gold and pearls, but also a northern waterway that would link up the Atlantic and the Pacific, later known as the Strait of Anián. Francisco Pizarro's conquest of the Inca and the capture of vast

quantities of gold in Peru in the early 1530s fueled the expectation that there might exist other great civilizations whose bounty awaited discovery by Europeans.

Expeditions by land and sea from Mexico in 1533, 1534 and 1535 up the Pacific coast to Baja California were led by Hernán Cortés and continued by the Viceroy of Mexico, Antonio de Mendoza, after Cortés' departure from Mexico to Spain in 1540. One expedition reached the Bay of La Paz where the settlement of Santa Cruz was founded. Its existence was temporary; the hostility of the indigenous inhabitants, storms, and lack of food supplies led to its abandonment by 1536 after Cortés rescued the remaining colonists. A final expedition sent by Cortés in 1539 under Francisco de Ulloa resulted in the realization that Baja California was not an island but a peninsula; "their discovery of an island of Cedars compensated little for expected cities of gold."⁸ Cortés, frustrated by his eroding authority in New Spain and in disagreement with the newly appointed Viceroy Mendoza, returned to Spain to press his various claims to the royal authorities, but to little avail.

In 1540, Viceroy Mendoza sent out expeditions northward, by land and sea, persuaded by rumors of the existence of the fabled Seven Cities of Gold, Cíbola. Hernando de Alarcón explored as far as the Colorado River. The land procession led by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado yielded little, and the viceroy turned his attentions to the sea with a new partner, Pedro de Alvarado, the Governor of Guatemala. Alvarado had received permission from the Crown during his last visit

to Spain to build a fleet for a voyage of discovery to the Moluccas, also known as the Spice Islands.

Upon his return to Central America he had at his disposal seven or eight ships constructed by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo between 1536 and 1540.⁹ Cabrillo had been left in charge of building and outfitting a fleet of ships for Alvarado in the port of Iztapa on the west coast of Guatemala. In total, there were thirteen ships, and when Alvarado reached Puerto Caballos, Honduras, from Spain on April 4, 1539, he came with men, supplies and munitions to outfit his expedition to the South Sea.¹⁰ It took twenty-five days to unload, and the Indigenous inhabitants of Governor Alvarado's *encomienda* towns in Guatemala were enlisted to transport his household goods on their backs to Santiago, as well as the equipment for the new armada being constructed in Iztapa. Thus the bearers traversed the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Alvarado enjoyed full support from the Crown for this new venture, partly as a result of the influence and protection of his wife's relatives.¹¹ Her cousin, Don Francisco de la Cueva, who had recently accompanied Alvarado back to Guatemala from Spain, was named his lieutenant

The 1530s and early 1540s saw further attempts by viceregal authorities in Mexico to sponsor new exploration and conquest. Frustrated by a lack of success from expeditions like that of Coronado (1540-1542, pictured below), the Spaniards renewed their interest in the Pacific. Thus Pedro de Alvarado received permission to build a fleet. With his considerable experience in ship building, Cabrillo was the natural choice to oversee this ambitious project.

Artist Tom Lovell





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V.Ya

Rather than use written plans, shipbuilders during the time of Cabrillo relied on practical knowledge and experience to construct vessels. Hence no plans exist of the ships constructed by Cabrillo at Giribaltique. Later in the century, these techniques would be recorded by Diego García de Palacio in his *Instrucción náutica para navegar*, published in Mexico in 1587.

governor. As Alvarado was occupied in the preparations for his armada, he entrusted all matters of government to the inexperienced de la Cueva.

Alvarado received permission to take two Indigenous slaves for every man in the new expedition. This arrangement greatly concerned the Bishop of Guatemala, Francisco Marroquín, who usually reserved his criticism of the governor, but in this instance was outspoken in his objection:

It is so harmful that I cannot describe it: and in addition to those, they will take many more freemen and slaves ... and this is the evil that damages and scandalizes this land by taking away its native inhabitants, whether they be freemen or slaves, and the Spanish receive no benefit [from this], because these people are so weak that whether on land or at sea, in one year, there will not be even one left ...¹²

Alvarado enlisted approximately 700 men, and an additional 100 men who had disembarked in Puerto Caballos arrived later. Large numbers joined the armada from all over the Indies, anxious to take part in this ambitious adventure. The armada was taken to the port of Acajutla in present-day El Salvador, from whence it set sail in late August or early September. It appears to have made a stop in Guatemala

before departing for Mexico. Juan de Segura, an agent of Hernán Cortés, was in the port of Acajutla towards the end of June 1540, and wrote this about Alvarado's armada:

Don Pedro de Alvarado has a very good armada here with thirteen ships, nine very large and very

good, and he will take five hundred men, very good ones, and many supplies; they did the muster list [*alarde*] here on the most recent day of San Juan, they are all very good people and they have many supplies and weapons for the armada.¹³

Alvarado enjoyed full support from the Crown for this new venture, partly as a result of the influence and protection of his wife's relatives.¹¹

Segura wrote from Acajutla again on August 9, with news of a group that had just arrived from Peru to accompany Alvarado, and he added:

[A]bout the armada of the *adelantado* ... it is being speedily loaded, which at the latest will be complete by the day of *Nuestra Señora* of October,¹⁴ and it is going straight to Guatemala for some supplies that they say the Marquis [Hernán Cortés] has sent there, and from there it goes to Acapulco to meet with the viceroy, and it is bringing some very good people and will carry ... six hundred men by land and sea and thirteen ships, including the galleon [of Antonio Diosdado] which has now joined it [from Peru].

No record of the crew has been found, but it probably included only a few residents from Guatemala.¹⁵ The armada that left in September departed with Bishop Marroquín, Governor Alvarado and Cabrillo all on board. Cabrillo's presence on this voyage was a last-minute arrangement, and he likely would have preferred to return to his home and family in Santiago de Guatemala, after so many years consumed with the building of the governor's armada. Cabrillo testified in 1541:

[T]he *adelantado* importuned me, begging me over and over that with my said ship I come with him in the armada as its admiral, saying that he would repay me in this manner for all the work I had done in the six years that I spent in service, building the armada, and everything else that I did for it, and because he begged me and importuned me so, I came with him in the armada as the Captain of the aforesaid ship of mine and as the Admiral of the armada ...¹⁶

There is no doubt that Cabrillo was a skilled and experienced shipwright, and Alvarado would therefore have wanted him to stay with the large procession of ships as they made their way to the coast of New Spain. Indeed, this

**The *San Salvador*,
flagship of the 1542
Cabrillo expedition.**

Artist Richard DeRosset



was the largest armada to set sail in the *Mar del Sur*, and Bishop Marroquín wrote that this fleet consisted of some of the best that had ever sailed the seas. One of the most impressive galleons was Cabrillo's own ship, the *San Salvador*, whose replica, as mentioned above, is docked in the harbor of San Diego, California.

The *San Salvador* was the flagship on the 1542 expedition to California, when Cabrillo served as Captain General, and his ship was then referred to as *La Capitana* and even simply as the *Juan Rodríguez*, and as such it flew the banner of an admiral from its foretopmast. A canvas painting of Alvarado's fleet was sent to Spain, but unfortunately little more is known about it and the painting has disappeared. Another ship in the fleet was the *Santiago*: a two-hundred-ton ship built and originally owned by Cabrillo and later sold to Governor Alvarado. A galleon that Cabrillo built and owned, called the *San Juan*, used for "voyages and cargo shipments," was probably refitted and prepared as part of Alvarado's fleet.¹⁷

The armada headed up the coast to New Spain, docking at the port of Santiago de Buena Esperanza in the province of Colima, Mexico, in November 1540. Governor Alvarado and Viceroy Mendoza re-negotiated the terms of their partnership for future discoveries.¹⁸ Bishop Marroquín was present as mediator, and also

because he had a financial interest in the outcome of the expeditions; there is record of Marroquín loaning Alvarado 1,300 pesos.¹⁹ However, there is evidence that Alvarado and the bishop were planning to return to Guatemala, and initially, Alvarado's nephew Juan de Alvarado was to be left in charge of the fleet.²⁰ Cabrillo and the others who owned ships in the fleet were displeased about the deal struck between Governor Alvarado and the viceroy. It conflicted with arrangements they had made with the Governor and would erode any potential profits that they might obtain during the voyage of discovery. Cabrillo's galleon, the *San Salvador*, was instrumental to the future plans of Alvarado and his new partner.

Adelantado Alvarado had promised Viceroy Mendoza half of all gains from any future discoveries made during the voyage to Las Moluccas, as well as half of his fleet. Alvarado would give all this in return for one fourth of any discoveries made by the Viceroy or by other armadas in his name. Working out the terms of this new agreement contributed to further expenses and delay for Alvarado and his crew. Around this time, Cabrillo was instructed to search for a new harbor for the fleet, and he soon found the port that was later named La Navidad in the province of Colima.²¹

In an attempt to placate his admiral and shipwright, Alvarado extended an *encomienda* grant (*cédula de encomienda*) to Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo for the recently vacated Guatemalan towns of Juymatepeque and Tacuba, dated in Colima, on December 20, 1540. Earlier, in March of that year, Governor Alvarado had reconfirmed Cabrillo's *encomienda* of the towns of Cobán and Xocotenango. No doubt both grants were dispatched in recognition of Cabrillo's growing importance to the success of this expedition, and to

compensate him for the large, long-standing debts that Alvarado had incurred with him and the fact that Cabrillo was financially over-extended and in debt after the construction and outfitting of many ships.²²

Prior to the departure of the armada to California in the spring of 1541, while preparing his men and equipment, Alvarado was enlisted by the viceroy to help quell a rebellion called the Mixtón war. Governor Pedro de Alvarado died in July 1541 in

Guadalajara, Mexico, having been crushed and mortally injured when a companion's horse fell on him. Although he had time to confess his sins and leave a last will and testament, Alvarado neglected to acknowledge the full extent of his debt to Cabrillo.

Cabrillo and some of the other men from Guatemala returned home in summer 1541 with some of the ships, but before he left the port of Navidad, he named an attorney to present witnesses in his absence to prove that

he was owed large sums by Alvarado at the time of his death and to request that the estate repay this debt. It is possible that another motive for returning home was to deliver a letter from the viceroy to the Cabildo of Santiago, with news of Alvarado's death. However, with his wife Beatriz and their two young sons, and perhaps three daughters from a previous union waiting for him in Santiago, and with the delays in Mexico and the untimely death of Alvarado, Cabrillo was probably anxious to return to his home. Another extremely pressing reason was the threat to his *encomienda* holdings by the acting lieutenant governor, don Francisco de la Cueva, whose authority after the death of Alvarado was ratified and endorsed by Viceroy Mendoza. Cabrillo most likely arrived near the end of August, because on the 29th he signed a power of attorney to his wife, dated in the Port of Acajutla.²³



This illustration from the Aztec Codex Telleriano-Remensis depicts Pedro de Alvarado's death during the Mixtón War in Guadalajara, July, 1541.

New information about Cabrillo's movements has recently come to light with the unearthing in 2010 of two Town Council books from Guatemala for the years 1530-1553, believed lost for over one hundred years. The name, "Juan Rodríguez," is only found once in the second *Libro del Cabildo* (1530-1541). On August 29, 1541, there are several entries in this book and one is the presentation of the letter from Viceroy Mendoza

announcing the death of Alvarado. Preceding that is a notice regarding the *escuderos*, men who represented absent and deceased residents, to which a Juan Rodríguez was a witness.²⁴ It could be a coincidence that he served as a witness to that document. However, we know that in an earlier deposition in Spain, Cabrillo referred to himself as an "escudero," and certainly at this juncture he was the only "Juan Rodríguez" in Guatemala. In addition, Cabrillo was the logical bearer of the viceroy's letter to Guatemala from New

Spain, and he may have either dispatched it from the port of Acajutla soon after he arrived, or delivered the letter in person, as suggested by his bearing witness on August 29, 1541. Since Cabrillo was present in Santiago de Guatemala at that time, it is likely that he was still there thirteen days later when the city was engulfed and destroyed by a massive mudslide on September 11, 1541, in which many people perished.

Although some historians believe that Cabrillo penned an account of the destruction of the city and sent it to Mexico, where it was printed with the name

"Juan Rodríguez, scribe" at the bottom, there is little to support this assertion. It appears that it was the most powerful men in the city (the Town Council and Crown officials) who elaborated the account, and that Cabrillo had nothing to do with it. It is fanciful to imagine that he would pass himself off as a "scribe," or be the man appointed along with the bishop to send off reports to the Crown. If Cabrillo had been present at the time of

the destruction of the city, he would likely have helped his family and neighbors find shelter and relocate to the new city in the Panchoy Valley, today the city of Antigua, Guatemala.

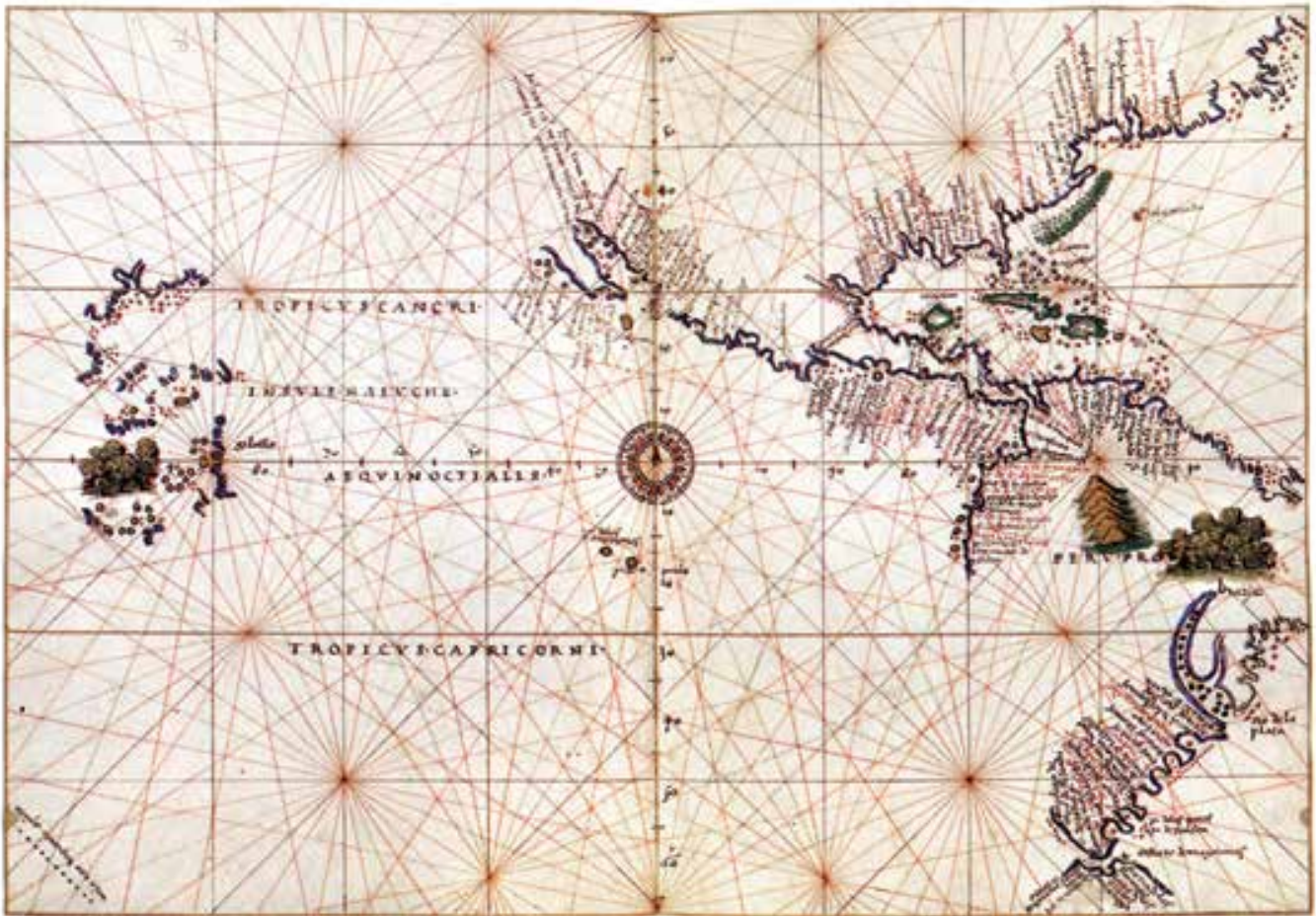
Voyage to California

Prior to leaving Navidad, Mexico in summer 1541 to return briefly to Guatemala, Cabrillo helped prepare two expeditions: one led by Hernando de Alarcón and the other by Francisco de Bolaños, sent out by Viceroy Mendoza. Later Cabrillo himself was commissioned

by the viceroy to prepare an armada, probably sometime in early 1542. In the spring of 1542, Cabrillo was back at the port of Navidad, having left his home in Guatemala for the last time.²⁵ One of the sailors on the expedition, Lázaro de Cárdenas, later a resident of Guatemala, testified that a *provisión* from the viceroy and the Royal Audiencia was brought to the port of Navidad by Ruy López de Villalobos, naming Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo as Captain General of the "discovery of the coast" and stating that Cabrillo was to take his ship the *San Salvador* and two others.²⁶



San Salvador as imagined by the artist Robert Marcotte.



This 1544 portolan chart of the Pacific Ocean by the Italian cartographer Battista Agnese was drafted long before the Spaniards had established a permanent presence in the Philippines. Agnese's depiction of the Moluccas located in Southeast Asia hints at their attraction for his contemporary European audience. A voyage to the Spice Islands promised great profit, and this destination, along with the coastal emporia of East Asia, gave impetus to Cabrillo's 1542 voyage.

Courtesy Library of Congress

Cabrillo served as pilot on the expedition, but there was no pretence that he was particularly trained in this art as a *piloto mayor*, which had been a licensed profession in Spain since 1508 for the preparation and execution of expeditions. The purposes of the expedition were to search for the existence of great cities and to find a passage to the Far East (the Strait of Anián), connecting the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. The fact that the search did not turn up any of these things did not render it a complete failure, because it did prove that the rich cities did not exist

and that there was no strait from the Pacific to the Atlantic between Cape San Lucas and Point Año Nuevo.²⁷ This was not a search for ports or locations for colonization efforts; it was a reconnaissance of the coast with the goal of reaching the Orient. Indeed, long after his death, Cabrillo's children and grandchildren would claim that he had served the Crown, and had died doing so, on his voyage to the "Molucas y Filipinas."

The only extant record of Cabrillo's journey is a brief recounting housed in the Archivo General de Indias in Seville in the Patronato Real section. Examining the voyage of Cabrillo contextualizes its historical importance: it marks the first contact between Native Americans and Europeans on the coast of California. The Europeans, however, did not form permanent settlements on the coast of California for more than two centuries after Cabrillo's voyage.

Although Cabrillo spent only eight weeks of his life in California, numerous places are named after him, and the Cabrillo National Monument on Point Loma in San Diego, which receives over a million visitors a year, was dedicated in his honor.²⁸ This contrasts with Guatemala,

where few people are aware that he existed, despite the fact that Cabrillo was registered as a resident of Santiago de Guatemala beginning in 1524, sired five children there, owned land, *encomiendas* and mines, and led the production of a shipbuilding industry. Although many of the place names in California designated by Cabrillo on his voyage have not survived, ironically, his unusual second surname “Cabrillo” has most emphatically lived on. The origin of the word California is still disputed, but it was in use by 1542, and may originate from “the fictitious island of California, featured by García Ordóñez de Montalvo in his novel published in 1508, *Las Sergas de Esplandián*, which featured the beautiful queen Calafia, who ruled over her Island of California, where Amazon women carried weapons made only of gold.”²⁹

On June 27, 1542, Cabrillo’s expedition left the port of Navidad to explore the North Pacific coast in three of the vessels that were part of Alvarado’s original fleet. Cabrillo was in the flagship, his own *San Salvador*, and accompanied by the *Victoria*, a smaller

square-rigged vessel, and the *San Miguel*, identified as a launch or a brigantine, captained respectively by Bartolomé Ferrer and Antonio Correa.³⁰ The ships sailed northward along the coast of Mexico, entering the Bay of

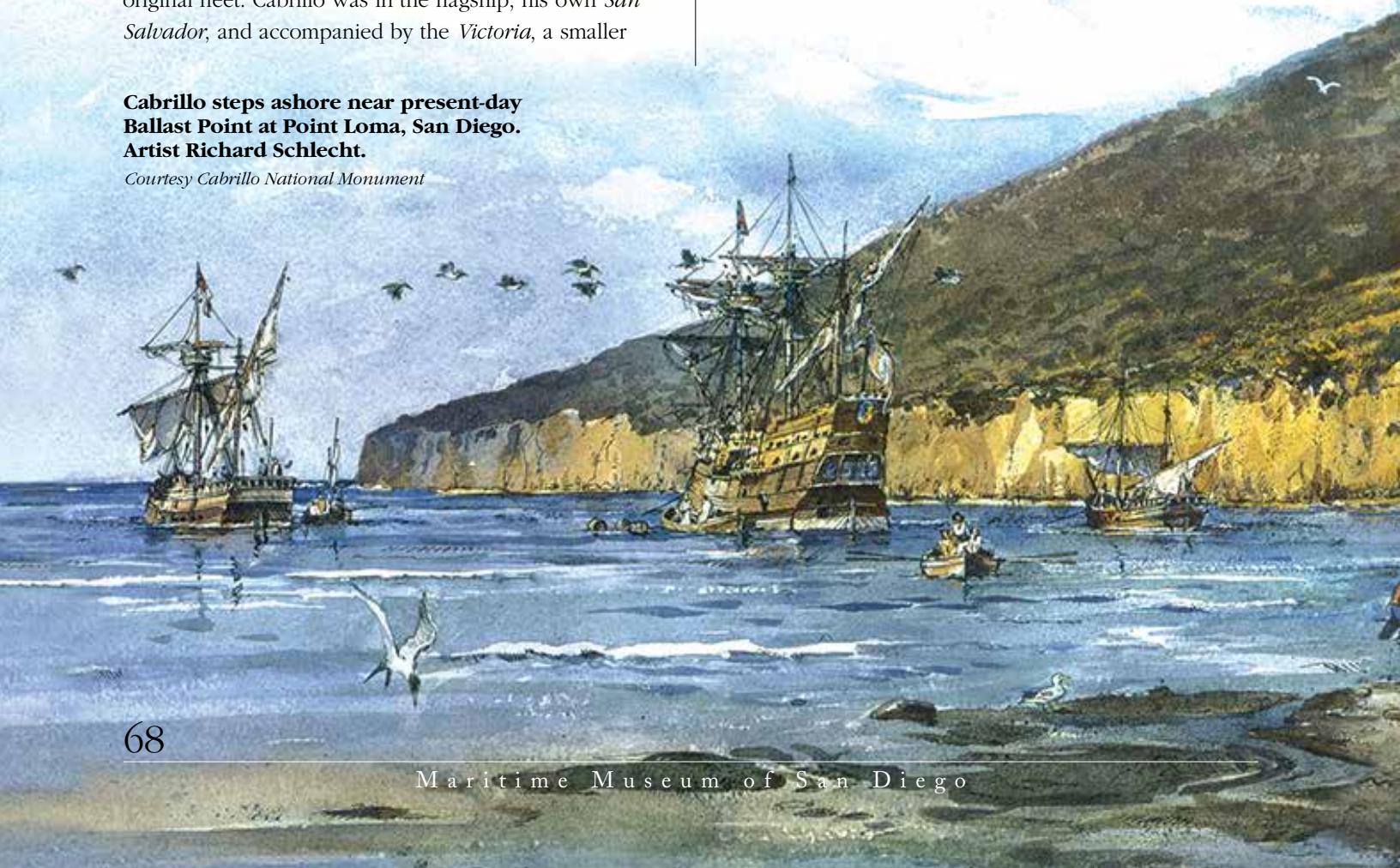
Ensenada, Baja California on September 17, 1542. They remained in port for five days and then traveled at a steady speed for three days until they caught sight of the Coronado Islands, which Cabrillo named the *Islas Desiertas*. Many of the points of latitude recorded in the log are slightly off, and this was the case with

the Coronado Islands, which were noted at 34 degrees latitude, which is 2 degrees or 140 miles too far north. From along the coast, the seamen saw their first signs of life: smoke rising from fires on the mainland. On September 28, 1542, the fleet sailed into and dropped anchor in what is today San Diego Bay, named *San Miguel* by Cabrillo, but recognized as *Alta California*, separate from *Baja California*.

On September 28, 1542, the fleet sailed into and dropped anchor in what is today San Diego Bay, named San Miguel by Cabrillo, but recognized as Alta California, separate from Baja California.

Cabrillo steps ashore near present-day Ballast Point at Point Loma, San Diego. Artist Richard Schlecht.

Courtesy Cabrillo National Monument

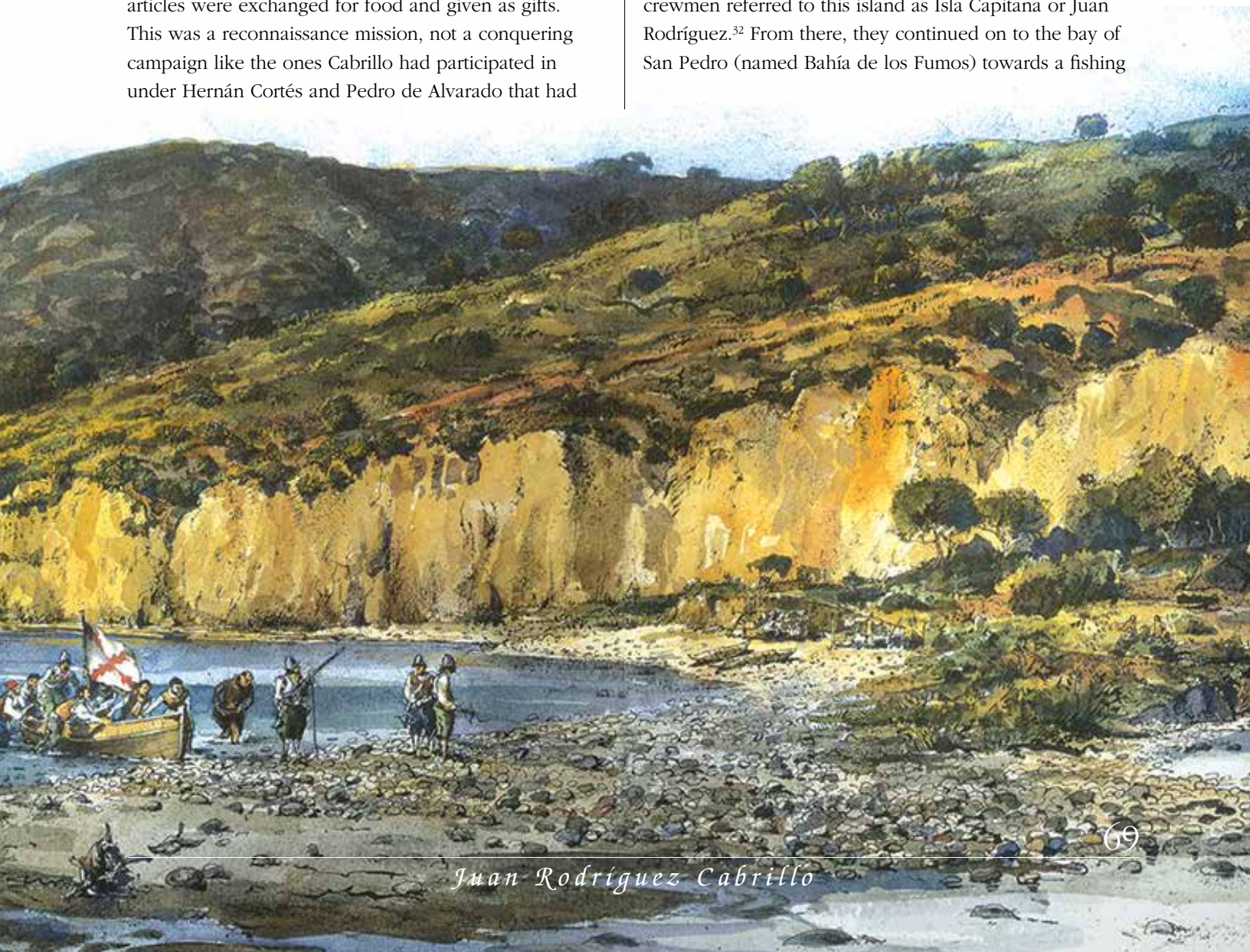


The Indigenous people encountered by Cabrillo when he went ashore were friendly but cautious, showing fear as they demonstrated through gestures and signs that they had previously encountered other bearded men and the imposing Spanish horses they rode upon; men armed with lances and crossbows, who had killed many natives, doubtless a reference to a detachment from the overland expedition led by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado. The Kumeyaay (*Kumiai*) were one of many native groups along the coast of California, representing the culturally diverse and dense population, including twenty-two linguistic families and 135 regional dialects.³¹

Interactions between the Cabrillo party and the local inhabitants were mostly peaceful. Cabrillo avoided hostility and encouraged his men not to engage, even after an incident when some of them fishing near the shore were wounded by natives. Beads and other articles were exchanged for food and given as gifts. This was a reconnaissance mission, not a conquering campaign like the ones Cabrillo had participated in under Hernán Cortés and Pedro de Alvarado that had

included capture and enslavement of Indigenous people and the handing out of *encomiendas*. Antagonistic engagements would have been counter-productive to the aims of the expedition, and almost without exception, this policy of friendly treatment was maintained by the Spaniards. Cabrillo recorded how the inhabitants were dressed, their use of large canoes, and the bartering of goods for fresh fish, berries and local foods. The Spaniards recorded the place names used by the local Indigenous people, a sign of cooperation and interaction between them and the predominantly Kumeyaay and Chumash inhabitants of the coast of California.

After resting for six days in the region of San Diego, the fleet set sail towards the Channel Islands, two of which they named La Victoria and San Salvador after their ships (present-day San Clemente and Santa Catalina). Although one island was named San Salvador after the flagship, years later in testimony, the crewmen referred to this island as Isla Capitana or Juan Rodríguez.³² From there, they continued on to the bay of San Pedro (named Bahía de los Fumos) towards a fishing



village, which Cabrillo called the Pueblo de Canoas, (the Town of the Canoas, modern-day San Buenaventura). They rested there for four days, receiving local inhabitants in their fine canoes, which held a dozen or more men. Around the middle of October 1542, the fleet anchored close to present-day Santa Barbara, then journeyed on past a large island, fifteen leagues in length, likely Santa Rosa. Shortly after, they sailed to a region named Dos Pueblos, where the locals “were dressed in skins and had very long, tangled hair, with very long strings entwined in their hair, and within the hair and long strings were many daggers of flint and bone and wood.”³³ The following day, they arrived at Point Concepción. Although bad weather and winter storms hampered the journey, by mid-November they reached somewhere close to what is today San Francisco Bay. Cabrillo made the decision to return southward to San Miguel in the Channel Islands, where the ships sought shelter in the small port of Cuyler Harbor.

Death of Cabrillo

There are conflicting accounts and conjecture about what took place and where during the second half of December 1542, when Cabrillo suffered an injury that led to his death. Testimony given in the 1560s by two of the sailors who were on this expedition, Lázaro de Cárdenas and Francisco de Vargas, was fairly consistent.³⁴ Vargas was perhaps a particularly compelling witness, because he was not only a crew member in the armada, but was also married to one of Cabrillo’s daughters, although in his testimony he does not mention that fact.³⁵ These sailors testified that while wintering on the island called La Posesión, also referred to confusingly as San Salvador, Capitana and Juan Rodríguez (present-day Santa Catalina according to Harry Kelsey and other historians from California), some men went ashore to get drinking water and were attacked by a group of Chumash warriors.

While we now know for certain Cabrillo’s place of birth, his final resting place remains a mystery. This stone inscribed with what appears to be the initials “JR” was found on Santa Rosa Island in 1901, giving rise to speculation that it might mark Cabrillo’s grave. To date however, no definitive evidence has been unearthed.

Courtesy Cabrillo National Monument



Cabrillo, hearing the loud commotion from the ship, ran to help his crew, and fell while jumping out of the ship, splintering a shinbone. Infection set in, and twelve days later on January 3, 1543, he died from his wound.³⁶ To date, Cabrillo’s burial site on the island has not been found.³⁷

Prior to his death, Cabrillo entrusted the armada to his chief pilot, Bartolomé Ferrer, and ordered him to continue exploring and recording everything he could about the islands, villages, and people of the Pacific coast, which Ferrer did, returning to the port of La Navidad, Mexico on April 14, 1543.

Notes

- 1 See John Martin, “A Tale of the Cabrillo Statues,” *The Journal of San Diego History* 60:4 (Fall 2014), 271-292; Graham Mackintosh, “Cabrillo Lands in Ensenada,” (accessed on January 18, 2018 at www.bajabound.com).
- 2 There have been several books written and published by the Maritime Museum of San Diego about the project to build the *San Salvador*. See *Mains’L Haul: A Journal of Pacific Maritime History* 52 (nos. 1-4, Winter/Spring/Summer/Fall, 2015), an issue which is dedicated to this extraordinary achievement. In 2016 the Maritime Museum’s executive director, Dr. Raymond Ashley, was honored for his contribution to Spain’s history with the *Cruz de Oficial de la Orden de Isabel la Católica*.
- 3 These findings were published in a Spanish version of this present work and covered extensively by media in Spain, Guatemala, and Mexico. See Wendy Kramer, *El español que exploró California: Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo (c. 1497-1543). De Palma del Río a Guatemala* (Córdoba: Diputación de Córdoba, 2018).
- 4 W. Michael Mathes, “The Expedition of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, 1542-1543: An Historiographical Reexamination,” *Southern California Quarterly* LXXVI

- (No. 3, Fall 1994), 247-253. Mathes references the works of the historians Hubert Howe Bancroft, George Davidson, Herbert E. Bolton, Charles E. Chapman and Henry R. Wagner.
- 5 To date, the most detailed and engaging account of Cabrillo's expedition to California is Harry Kelsey's biography of Cabrillo, which was first published in 1986. Harry Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1986).
 - 6 AGI, Patronato 20, N.5, R.13, Relación del descubrimiento de Juan Rodríguez, 1542.
 - 7 Iris Engstrand, "Seekers of the "Northern Mystery": European Exploration of California and the Pacific," in *Contested Eden*, ed Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 86.
 - 8 Iris Engstrand and Harry Kelsey, "The Pathway to California: Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo and the Building of San Salvador," *Mains'l Haul* 51:1-4 (2015), 19-20.
 - 9 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 71, 76. Kelsey noted that: "The entire fleet consisted of thirteen vessels, of which seven or eight were built by Rodríguez between 1536 and 1540."
 - 10 Kramer, *Encomienda Politics*, 152-153.
 - 11 AGI, Patronato 28, R.63, Nombramientos y concesiones a Pedro de Alvarado, 9 de agosto, 1538. This document includes a royal provision naming Alvarado governor and captain general of all that he discovers on his journey to the South Sea.
 - 12 The bishop's letter was dated November 20, 1539; Carmelo Sáenz de Santa María, *El licenciado don Francisco Marroquín, primer obispo de Guatemala (1499-1563): su vida, sus escritos* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, 1965), 152-160
 - 13 The transcript of the letters of Juan de Segura is in Woodrow Borah, "Unos documentos sobre las empresas cortesianas en Panamá y Acajutla, 1539-1540," *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* 9:9 (1987), 15-18.
 - 14 A reference no doubt to the day of the Virgin of the Rosary, on October 7.
 - 15 Kramer, *Encomienda Politics*, 153.
 - 16 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 77. Kelsey provided a translated version of this testimony. Original testimony can be found in AGI, Justicia, 280, Beatriz Sánchez vecina de Guatemala con don Francisco de la Cueva, fols. 25v 26.
 - 17 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 71-2, 75. Kelsey noted that the *Santiago* was the flagship of Alvarado's fleet and of the fleet that Ruy López de Villalobos later took to the Moluccas. Falla, *Extractos de Escrituras Públicas*, III, 185-187. AGCA, A1.20. Leg.732, Poder que dio Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo a Juan Cansino para que fuera maestre del navío San Juan, 17 de enero, 1538, fols. 168r.-169r.; Fletamiento del navío San Salvador a Juan Gómez Camacho, para viajes al Perú [1538], fol. 181v.
 - 18 AGI, Patronato 21, N.3, R.2, Asiento y capitulación que celebró don Antonio de Mendoza, virrey de Nueva España y el adelantado don Pedro de Alvarado sobre el descubrimiento que éste ofreció hacer en el Mar del Sur. En Tiripitio (Nueva España), 29 de noviembre, 1540.
 - 19 Kramer, *Encomienda Politics*, 154.
 - 20 Antonio Cortijo Ocaña y Adelaida Cortijo Ocaña, *Cartas desde México y Guatemala* (Universidad de Extremadura: Cáceres, 2003), 51. According to Gómez Díaz in his letter of September 2, 1541, Alvarado made an agreement with the viceroy in Mexico, but his intention was to return to Guatemala later with the bishop, leaving Juan de Alvarado as captain of the Armada.
 - 21 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 81-83.
 - 22 AGI, Justicia 286, N.4, R.2, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, vecino de Santiago de Guatemala contra Francisco de la Cueva, 1542-1568. AGI, Patronato 87, N.2, R.4, Información de los méritos y servicios del general Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo. Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 82, 86.
 - 23 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 87, citing AGI, Justicia 280, Beatriz Sánchez de Ortega viuda de Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo con don Francisco de la Cueva, fols. 4v-7.
 - 24 See Kramer and Luján Muñoz, eds., *El Libro Segundo del Cabildo*, 349-350.
 - 25 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 85, 97, 99.
 - 26 AGI, Patronato 87, N.2, R.4, Información de los méritos y servicios del general Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, testimony of Lázaro de Cárdenas, fol. 21v.
 - 27 Mathes, "The Expedition of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo," 249.
 - 28 Raymond Ashley, "California's Origin Story," *Mains'l Haul*, 51:1-4 (2015), 10-13.
 - 29 Engstrand and Kelsey, "The Pathway to California," 25-26. The authors cite "Las Sergas de Esplandían," which was first published in Seville between 1508 and 1510 by Jacob Cromberger; the authors note that the book was popular among seafaring mariners.
 - 30 Engstrand, "Seekers of the 'Northern Mystery'," 83-85. Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 112-113.
 - 31 James D. Nauman, *An Account of the Voyage of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo* (San Diego, CA: Cabrillo National Monument Foundation, 1999), 59. The entry on the Kumeyaay was written by George Herring.
 - 32 Engstrand and Kelsey, "The Pathway to California," 27.
 - 33 Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft: History of California*, Vol. 1 (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft and Company, 1884), 73. AGI, Patronato 20, N.5, R.13, Relación del descubrimiento de Juan Rodríguez, 1542, img. 7.
 - 34 AGI, Patronato 87, N.2, R.4, Información de los méritos y servicios del general Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo. Nauman, *An Account of the Voyage of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 78.
 - 35 In 1548, Francisco de Vargas was married to Cabrillo's daughter. He was 25 years old, had lived in Guatemala for four years, and his wife had three children from a first marriage. See: AGCA, A1. Leg.2196, Exp.15750, Los conquistadores que vinieron a la conquista de esta provincia con el adelantado don Pedro de Alvarado, capitán general, 23 de agosto, 1548.
 - 36 Kelsey believes it is possible that Cabrillo also fractured his arm in the fall. See his *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 158. This was reported by witnesses after his death, although his eldest son said only that his father had broken his leg.
 - 37 Nauman, *An Account of the Voyage of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 78. Nauman sums up the controversy over the resting place of Cabrillo and agrees with Engstrand and Kelsey's conclusion that it was the island of Santa Catalina.

Chapter 5

Conclusion: Cabrillo, Native Son of Palma del Río

New documentary sources uncovered in the last two years establish that when Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was away from Guatemala between 1531-1533, he gave sworn testimony on numerous occasions, and appeared before Crown authorities to ask for favors, exemptions and permits – his rewards for services provided. In most instances, he was identified as either Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, native of Palma de Micer Gilio, or simply as Juan Rodríguez de Palma. There is now abundant evidence to confirm that Cabrillo was a native son of the city of Palma del Río. It is my hope that I have provided a convincing answer to what many have thought was the most intriguing question about Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo: Where was he born?¹

In his excellent study on Cabrillo published in 1986, historian Harry Kelsey had identified the use of this surname in a document dating from 1536. We have now, however, established that the earliest documented usage of his surname Cabrillo was February 1532, while he was in Cádiz, Spain. Prior to 1532, and indeed afterwards and throughout the rest of his life, in documentation drawn up in Guatemala, he was known predominantly as Juan Rodríguez, a very common name both in Spain and in

Portugal. Without the additional information that he was also known as “de Palma” it was challenging, if not impossible, to track him down in the archives. As a result, documentation in the AGCA in Guatemala City and in the AGI in Seville was overlooked. It has now been proven that Juan Rodríguez de Palma was another name for Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo.

The particular context of the depositions, in which he says his full name and where he was born, is very compelling, as it is his personal verbatim testimony, under oath, in front of the scribe and the king’s officials, after a

very fraught series of events whose first act in Havana culminated in the brutal and prolonged torture of crew members from the *San Juan* suspected of stealing gold destined for the Spanish Crown. Shortly afterwards, in Cádiz, in a determined effort to get some of his own gold back from the authorities at the House of Trade, Cabrillo once again stated his full name and that he was from Palma de Micer Gilio; these were not the moments for invention or glossing over the truth. Rather, it seems persuasive that Cabrillo provided this additional information because he was forced to by the circumstances, and that he was left with no other choice.

Shortly afterwards, in Cádiz, in a determined effort to get some of his own gold back from the authorities at the House of Trade, Cabrillo once again stated his full name and that he was from Palma de Micer Gilio; these were not the moments for invention or glossing over the truth.

This map of the Iberian peninsula gives an indication of its regional diversity. Many of the first waves of conquistadors were from the south. Cabrillo hailed from the southern region of Andalucía.



Intriguing details about Cabrillo's life have emerged in these new primary sources. He first left Spain in 1514 in the armada of Pedro Arias Dávila (Pedrarias) and he only returned once to Spain, after eighteen years, and that was the rather eventful voyage of 1531-1532, outlined above. He carried with him back

to Spain over 1,500 gold *pesos*, a large amount to have accumulated, some of which belonged no doubt to his brother-in-law. The reasons for risking the harrowing journey by sea were several: to marry Beatriz Sánchez de Ortega; to bring back his cousin to marry his brother-in-law; and to establish business ties with his father-in-law, Alonso Sánchez de Ortega. Cabrillo's cousin, Juana Rodríguez, disappeared from the records after 1532, and it seems that Diego Sánchez de Ortega was single when he died, but the documents brought her to life briefly, and confirmed that Cabrillo had close family ties in Seville. Beatriz and her father were from the *colación* (the parish) of Santa María in Seville, and perhaps details like that will help inform later research on the Sánchez de Ortega family.

Cabrillo formed a relationship in Seville with an Italian merchant from Perugia, borrowing sums of money from him and giving him power of attorney to oversee the return of some of Cabrillo's household goods to Guatemala via Mexico, while Cabrillo himself appears to have purposefully travelled back to Guatemala via Panama. His intention was to meet up first with the Governor of Guatemala, Pedro de Alvarado, as he most certainly did in Puerto de Fonseca, Nicaragua. Cabrillo did testify that Alvarado was "building ships" the last time he saw him before his departure for Spain; on Cabrillo's return, he too would be occupied in building ships for himself and for the governor for many years. Thanks to a recently located notarial record in Guatemala it appears that the flagship

of the expedition to California, the *San Salvador*, was constructed by Cabrillo prior to 1538, rented out by him early in that year, and used to transport horses to sell in Peru. This is the earliest known record of the *San Salvador*.²

We have also seen that Cabrillo petitioned for a plot of land in the Tianguencillo while back in Spain in 1532, and that as late as 1546, his heirs were still averse to claiming it, preferring instead the alternative land they had somehow managed to obtain in the Panchoy Valley. Did Beatríz and sons ever take up the league of land that Cabrillo was originally granted? The answer to this question is not clear, but there was certainly ongoing controversy about their agricultural land for a very long time. This dispute runs parallel with the heated quarrel over his *encomienda* towns, particularly the town of Cobán, which went on for decades and involved Cabrillo's son and namesake, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo de Medrano.

Cabrillo and his brother-in-law held half of Cobán from at least the late 1520s, and rich placer mines found in the vicinity in 1529 made them wealthy men by the summer of 1531 when the *San Juan* set sail from Veracruz with Cabrillo and his gold on board. The tribute demands on the people of Cobán were onerous, but nothing like the demands for manpower to supply the *encomenderos'* homes in the city of Santiago and their slave gangs in the mines, and to tend to their agricultural lands. Soon, the inhabitants of Cobán would be supplying pitch to the shipyards where Cabrillo was building Alvarado's armada to the Moluccas or Spice islands.

By 1537, however, the *encomenderos* were in open conflict with Dominican friars under Bartolomé de las Casas, who claimed Cobán as part of the province of "Verapaz," which the Dominicans intended to convert to Christianity and settle by peaceful means. Witnesses testified that the Indigenous

population of Cobán would not have served the *encomenderos* longer than six years in total, and that after that time, they refused to serve. In collusion with Governor Alvarado, Cabrillo tried to ensure ongoing possession of the *encomienda*, but despite a title expended in 1540 and litigation that dragged on for over twenty years, it appears that neither Cabrillo nor his heirs ever managed to regain control of this *encomienda*. Other *encomiendas* held by Cabrillo, like the town of Xicalapa, while providing *cacao* in



Wealth flowed to Cabrillo and his fellow conquistadors through the post-conquest acquisition of *encomiendas*, mines and productive agricultural land. The Spaniards lacked sufficient numbers to work their fields or mines themselves and therefore their fortunes rested upon the utilization of Indigenous labor. Such a system was open to significant abuse. These illustrations and accompanying Nahuatl text from the 1565 *Codex Osuna* are part of litigation brought by Indigenous leaders before the viceroy of New Spain, Luis de Velasco, alleging the non-payment of services rendered. Spaniards are shown ordering Indians to work inside a walled garden and textile factory.

Courtesy Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid

tribute, fell victim to population decline and never had the potential of Cobán.

Cabrillo knew how to diversify his businesses, and his shipbuilding enterprise and the trade in horses and goods that he transported to the *nouveau riche* conquerors in Peru opened up avenues for the acquisition of great wealth. It can be speculated that his ephemeral presence in 1536, as a resident and *encomendero* in Gracias a Dios, Honduras, was part of a larger endeavor that might have included some of his daughters from an earlier union with an Indigenous woman, and their husbands. Patchy notarial records in Guatemala and Seville have still yielded a surprising number of signed legal documents that Cabrillo had drawn up in the 1530s:

an important documentary presence. To date, five separate documents have been found that he signed with the name “Juan Rodríguez,” and two of them also mentioned his full name “Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo” in the body of the text. This is abundant verification for the activities and concerns of a conquistador residing in Guatemala, even one who liked to vary the way he referred to himself.

Cabrillo left a large legacy behind for the barely twenty years from the first conquering campaign in Guatemala in 1524 until his death in 1543. Professor Iris Engstrand from the University of San Diego in California observed recently that: “Cabrillo’s gone from being our least-known explorer to our best-known explorer.”³ The same could be said for his status among the Guatemalan *conquistador-encomenderos*, as we now know quite a bit about his activities and his family. The sheer quantity of documentary evidence is unusual for this period and place and exceeds the information uncovered for most of Cabrillo’s contemporaries. It suggests that he had outsize ambition, abilities, and accomplishments coupled with good timing and bad luck in equal measure.

It is possible that the journey to Colima, New Spain, with Governor Alvarado was thrust upon him and that

he had little choice in the matter. Just a short time later, after Alvarado’s unexpected death in Mexico, the mantle fell on his shoulders to continue the exploration, summoned by Viceroy Mendoza, forcing his return to Navidad, Mexico in spring of 1542. As Kelsey noted about this period, Cabrillo’s world was a shambles, with Alvarado’s grand fleet, men and

equipment dispersed

and, “With his own

personal fortune seriously depleted by the disaster in Santiago.”⁴ Based on this

premise, it is clear that he could not turn down the

prospect of recuperating some of his fortune in a

voyage of discovery, one that would soon claim his

life. I hope this monograph has advanced the study

of Cabrillo and opened up the field for future

archival research on him and his family, and provided

historians with the documentary evidence long sought after regarding his place of birth, filling in some lacunae about his career and activities from 1514 onwards.

Unfortunately, we know almost nothing about his participation in the armada of Pedrarias Dávila, and there is no record of his departure. Little is known about other residents of Palma del Río who made up part of Pedrarias’ company, although in 1519, among a group of men who received *encomienda* grants in Castilla del Oro, there was a Francisco López, from Palma de Micer Gilio, a cook and sailor married in Spain who had arrived two years before.⁵ In addition, there is record in the Municipal Archive of Palma del Río of a deed for a lot sold by a man named Alfonso López de Amor, between February 16 and 17, 1514, because “he is traveling to the mainland in the company of Bishop Friar Juan Cabedo.” López de Amor said that he needed money to pay for his attire and supplies. The authorities understood the reason for his sale to be “his travels.”⁶ These two examples confirm that at least two other men, one a sailor and one a passenger, both from Palma del Río, made up part of the armada of Pedrarias along with Cabrillo.

Cabrillo knew how to diversify his businesses, and his shipbuilding enterprise and the trade in horses and goods that he transported to the *nouveau riche* conquerors in Peru opened up avenues for the acquisition of great wealth.

The Origins and Ancestry of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo

The new findings relating to Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo give us some clues to his origins, but we are still lacking key information, such as the names of his parents, his exact year of birth, and the date of his marriage in Seville.

In his biography of Cabrillo, Kelsey says that it is unlikely he was an *hidalgo*, nor even descended from a “respectable lineage.” He and his heirs would certainly have mentioned this in the wealth of documents generated during his life and after his death, mostly in relation to disputes over his estate, which at the time of his death was one of the wealthiest in Central America.⁷

It seems now that we cannot fail to consider that Cabrillo, born at the end of the fifteenth century, was a member of one of the large minority populations present in Palma de Micer Gilio. However, it is next to impossible to trace the origins of *conversos* or *moriscos* without carrying out genealogical studies in Spain of the period prior to that of conversions. This research will be crucial in any future investigation of Cabrillo’s origins.⁸ Regrettably, in the absence of such research, our comments here can only be speculative and we are unable to make a definite attribution at this time. The whole topic is fraught with difficulty when dealing with populations which, “for more than a generation ... had been industriously hiding their identities. Unfortunately, at this time we can do no more than speculate.”⁹

The lands under the domain of noblemen (the *señoríos*), such as “Palma de Micer Gilio,” were a refuge in the fifteenth century for minorities fleeing large urban centers, but circumstances were changing.¹⁰ Thus, around 1514, and even earlier, there were reasons for a young *converso* from Palma, for example, to seek a new life, heading first to the port city of Seville, and



***La Giralda* - the bell tower of the cathedral of *Santa María de la Sede* in the historic heart of Seville. Constructed under the Muslim Almohad dynasty, the Giralda formerly functioned as a minaret of the Great Mosque of Seville. In 1248, during the Reconquest, the city was captured by Christians and the Great Mosque was converted into a cathedral. The tower would have been clearly visible to Cabrillo on his wedding day in 1532. Southern Spain is dotted with such reminders of the region’s 700 year domination by the Moors. Cabrillo’s ancestors may well have been closely associated with this story.**

then joining one of the armadas sailing for the Indies.¹¹ Pedrarias Dávila, of *converso* origin himself,¹² had many *conversos* and no doubt *moriscos* in his armada, as well as travelers from many other countries, and they made their way to *Tierra Firme* with him in 1514, with many continuing on to Cuba, New Spain and Peru.¹³ In addition, with the largest *morisco* community (*aljama mora*) of Andalucía, and in the wake of mass conversions, it’s not difficult to imagine a young *morisco* from Palma del Río, with certain skills and concerned about his future, leaving for Seville with members of his faith to settle in the neighborhood of

Triana and then taking advantage of the opportunity to travel to the Indies.¹⁴ At the beginning of the sixteenth century, both *moriscos* and *conversos* from Palma had good reasons to seek a new life elsewhere.¹⁵ The new Spanish empire was seen as a place of opportunity for populations in Spain fleeing persecution they faced at home.

The Arco de Herradura (Horseshoe Arch) in the eastern portal of the walled enclosure in modern-day Palma del Río. Also known as a “keyhole arch” this is a classic expression of Moorish architecture, and yet another reminder of the city’s strong connection with its past.



Spaniards who lacked a permit to travel to the New World managed to arrive there both clandestinely and through legal channels, despite the prohibitions that were gradually put in place to prevent them from doing so. In 1501 the Catholic monarchs advised that neither “Moors nor Jews, nor heretics nor those reconciled, nor recent converts to our faith” could travel to Spanish America. These and other prohibitions were reaffirmed in 1513, in addition to new ones stating that “Moors already in America” were not allowed to receive “*encomiendas* of Indians.” Further sanctions and prohibitions followed, which by 1530 incorporated not only Jews and Moors but also all their converted descendants.¹⁶ Nevertheless, enforcement of these and other prohibitions was inconsistent and they came into effect slowly enough to allow legal entry for many.¹⁷

In the case of some *conversos*, they gained entry as the servants of permit holders.¹⁸

Unfortunately, we still know very little about the presence of Moors in Spanish America and few academic studies have been devoted to the topic, although there has been more interest in the area in the last few years.¹⁹ In his seminal study on the conquest and colonization

of Peru, which took place after that of Guatemala and with some of the same men, Lockhart noted that, “The *moriscos* were the most exotic and mysterious element in the whole broad range of people involved in the Spanish conquest.”²⁰ The term was confusing because it defined both the *moriscos* from Spain and the slaves from Morocco. The Spanish frequently called them “white” and there is no doubt that they were physically indistinguishable from other Spaniards. Lockhart noted that for Peru, and we believe this also would have been the case for Guatemala, numbers would never have been large, and they would have been able

to assimilate easily in Spanish America, given that most of the *moriscos* from Spain had Spanish surnames and spoke Spanish. In both Guatemala and Peru, there is more evidence of *morisca* women than men. In the specific case of Peru, Lockhart concluded that, “*Morisco* men were little more than an oddity.”²¹ However, Cristobal de Burgos, a veteran of the Peruvian campaign with Francisco Pizarro, was “widely reputed to be a *Morisco*.”²²

In Guatemala, Lieutenant Governor don Francisco de la Cueva had a *morisco* slave who was in charge of bringing wheat from his *encomienda* to the city,²³ while



Eugenio de Moscoso, fellow traveler with Cabrillo back to Spain, purchased a “white slave” while he was there in 1532. Soon after his return to Guatemala, he decided to move to Peru with his black slaves and his *morisca* – no doubt the white slave – despite having a wife in Spain.²⁴ At the beginning of the Colonial period, many of the *moriscas* were concubines, although some of them later ended up marrying Spaniards.²⁵

In Hernán Cortés’ inner circle in New Spain there were many *conversos*, and it was alleged that “he did not issue the edicts against

A Moorish woman in Spain from the time of Cabrillo, sketched by the German traveller and artist Christoph Weiditz.

Courtesy Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg

Moriscos near the city of Granada.

Artist Joris Hoefnagel



the descendants of Jews and *moriscos*, who were supposed to be expelled from New Spain,” and that “he concealed, protected and favored them, granting them estates.”²⁶ It is believed that Governor Alvarado in Guatemala would have followed suit and members of his family were intermarried with *conversos*.²⁷ One of the many *conversos* punished by the Inquisition in Mexico was Gil González de Benavides de Ávila, who was married to Pedro de Alvarado’s niece and like Cabrillo, had also come to Tierra Firme (Panama) with Pedrarias Dávila.²⁸

In the atmosphere of suspicion in the sixteenth century, it was common for different groups to reproach and denounce each other. The chronicler Bernal Díaz del Castillo, a resident of Guatemala, mentioned “the accusations that went back and forth as well as the slander,” and Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, himself a *converso* as recently documented in great detail by Juan Gil,²⁹ commented that the Bishop of Guatemala, Francisco Marroquín, was “of suspect lineage,” no doubt based on his last name.³⁰ Three letters from the president and royal officials of the Audiencia de Guatemala in the 1550s specifically refer to *moriscos* in Guatemala, and one in particular mentions the prohibitions against *moriscos* and *conversos*. It is obvious that the implementation of these “removal orders,” would not be simple and that many complications would arise in their execution, and that officials in the Indies were hesitant to enforce

them.³¹ For example, although the decrees established that all descendents of Jews or Moors who had been executed (burned) or prosecuted by the Holy Inquisition must leave New Spain within six months, Bernal Díaz commented that “only two people left New Spain.”³²

Scenes from the Florentine Codex. Research indicates that a number of participants in the Spanish conquest and settlement of the Americas had their origins in groups considered to be on the fringes of society in Spain - particularly descendants of Jews and Moors.

In 1551, Guatemalan officials tersely acknowledged receipt of a dispatch from His Majesty regarding the orders stating, “that the *moriscos* should be sent back to Spain.”³³ Later, in 1552, the President of the Audiencia, Licenciado Cerrato, wrote, “I also received a letter confirming the first order that the newly converted Moors or their children should be expelled from this land, and because there are some who are married to Indian women and others married to Spanish women and there are many *moriscas* married to Spanish men, there has been some confusion as to how this order should apply to them.” And further on, he notes, “There are also some other New Christians who are



Jews and children of Jews, who are also married, and it is appropriate to clarify whether the order will apply to them or what should be done about it, because the reason behind it is one and the same.”³⁴ This matter is referred to once more in 1556, but now the officials explain why they



have not yet executed the instructions: “It is ordered that the *moriscas* who are in these parts are to be sent to Spain, and there are many who are married to Spanish men, and people here have questions about whether this situation is covered in the royal order, because it seems that a wife must follow her husband; for that reason the order has not been executed, Your Majesty should order and specify what may be of service.”³⁵

What’s in a name?

Research into Cabrillo’s movements and his various activities has brought to light onomastic evidence that is very contradictory and conceals more than it reveals. The Crown preferred to refer to Cabrillo as “Juan Rodríguez de Palma,” nomenclature that was used in 1532 and again in 1546. The usage of a person’s birthplace as their surname was commonplace in Spain at the time, as Juan Gil explains: “It is very common for a person

to be known by their place of origin: from Baeza, from Cordoba, from Ecija, from Seville, from Trujillo, etc.” But as well, Gil adds, when the Jews were expelled from Spain, “those who remained took places, cities and provinces as surnames.”³⁶

Hugh Thomas, an historian specializing in the conquest period and the first generation of conquerors in New Spain, underscores that the use of toponyms in surnames was identified as an indication of *converso* origins, and that in the case of New Spain, there were many men whose surnames were place names. As Thomas observed, “Where one was baptized became who one was,” further stating that even using conservative numbers in his calculations, more than five per cent of the men who accompanied Cortés were probably converted Jews, and that the percentage would be even higher in the case of the men who arrived in New Spain from Cuba with Pánfilo de Narváez. He estimates that even a modest calculation would place their number closer to eight percent. These figures are based on his calculation that at least one quarter of the men with toponyms as part of their surnames were *conversos*.³⁷ Meanwhile, Eva Uchmany, specialist in the history of the *conversos* in New Spain, reached the conclusion after studying the records of the Inquisition and other sources that a significant number had emigrated to New Spain and that by the middle of the sixteenth century, there were between 300 and 400 new Christians.³⁸

Cabrillo was part of the large group, almost 1,000 men, who arrived in New Spain from Cuba with Narváez. Among their number was Hernando Alonso, a carpenter

who helped build brigantines for Cortés, along with Cabrillo who assisted with the preparation of pitch for caulking the ships. Alonso was a *conquistador-encomendero* and merchant and was the first man “burned for being a Jew” by the Holy Office of the Inquisition in the fall of 1528 in Mexico.³⁹ During

the conquest of neighboring Chiapas that same year, astonishingly, most of the conquerors’ and colonizers’ surnames coincide with the names of people sentenced by the Inquisition in Ciudad Real, Spain. According to Uchmany, the corners of the Spanish empire farthest from the major urban centers attracted the families of those defamed and condemned by the Inquisition in Spain. These families fled Spain and it is understandable that they would end up settling in more remote places like Guatemala and Chiapas.⁴⁰ This gives us some idea of the social environment in which Cabrillo lived.

We still have no idea what significance to attach to the Crown’s usage of the name “Juan Rodríguez de Palma” to refer to Cabrillo. The last name “de Palma” (province of Córdoba), or “de



Scenes from a seventeenth-century painting by the artist Miguel González depicting the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs.

Courtesy Museo de América, Madrid

la Palma” (province of Seville) was common among *conversos* in Seville during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.⁴¹ It is worth recalling that neither Cabrillo himself nor his descendants in Guatemala ever used that name. This is despite the fact that they continued presenting transfers and copies of the royal provisions issued in that very name to prove their entitlement to certain agricultural lands. One can surmise therefore, that they avoided using the name and that Cabrillo never introduced himself that way in the New World. Prior to 1532, he referred to himself only as Juan Rodríguez, and he travelled to New Spain from Cuba under that name.

There were no naming conventions in the sixteenth century. Rather, there was a great deal of inconsistency, and parents chose the names of their children from among the surnames of their most important relatives. Furthermore, in Spain it was very easy to change one’s name, and it was both permitted and tolerated, which means that it is often challenging if not impossible to trace a person’s forbears unless there is proof of the names of their parents and grandparents. At the time, both *moriscos* and *conversos* used Spanish names, and the more common they were, the better. It was also customary to take the surname of one’s godparents at the time of baptism and conversion to Christianity.⁴² Regarding *conversos* in the province of Seville, Juan Gil says the following: “Usually, the names that continued to be used were the most innocuous, the most common, the least significant; in short, the names which allowed those who bore them to go unnoticed.”⁴³ In fact, Rodríguez was a very common surname in Spain, and in Palma del Río, Christians, *moriscos* and *conversos* all used it.

To further complicate any analysis of his origins, Cabrillo sometimes used the term “merchant” to describe his profession while he was in Seville. Indeed, it cannot be denied that his arrangement with the Sánchez de Ortega family was a typical example of such a merchant

relationship at the time. Cabrillo, a trusted new person, already a partner of the family’s son in Guatemala, became part of the family through marriage and embarked on business ventures with his father-in-law, who was based in Seville.⁴⁴ However, despite his mercantile activities in Guatemala, building ships and selling horses and other items in Peru, he never used the term “merchant” after his name in any of the documents that we have

located in Guatemala. As an *encomendero* the two activities were seen to be incompatible, and *encomiendas* were rarely if ever assigned to merchants in the 1520’s and 1530’s in Guatemala.⁴⁵ It was a profession that was looked down upon by some, and at the time was broadly associated with *conversos*, although not exclusively. Cabrillo prudently avoided referring to himself as a merchant in Guatemala, where his *encomiendas*, royal favors and aspirations to appear as an “*hidalgo*” would quickly have been hindered by that claim.



“The Baptism of the Moors after the Conquest of Granada.” Bas relief by Felipe Bigarny, 1522. Cathedral of Granada, Spain

Arbitrarily, although always in Spain, Cabrillo called himself an “*escudero*,” as if seeking to append something to his name, having dropped temporarily the use of Cabrillo in these instances. It is strange that without any apparent need to do so, he kept changing his profession. None of the other residents of Guatemala who travelled to Spain with him mentioned being *escuderos* or merchants in their testimony. Why did he use so many names and professions? We can only infer that he was trying to create a certain image when he was in Spain, while at the same time trying to cover up another one. Under those circumstances, his preoccupation was doubtless to deal with his business concerns, marry and return as soon as possible to the refuge and relative anonymity of Guatemala, where he was a rich and powerful *encomendero* with great projects planned for the future alongside Governor Alvarado.

In lively conversations that I have maintained over the past year or so with historians in Seville, California and in Palma del Río, we have all pondered the mystery of the name “Cabrillo.” While Rodríguez was a common surname in Palma in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, no one was named Cabrillo. Historians in Palma told me that recent searches in the archives for the surname Cabrillo



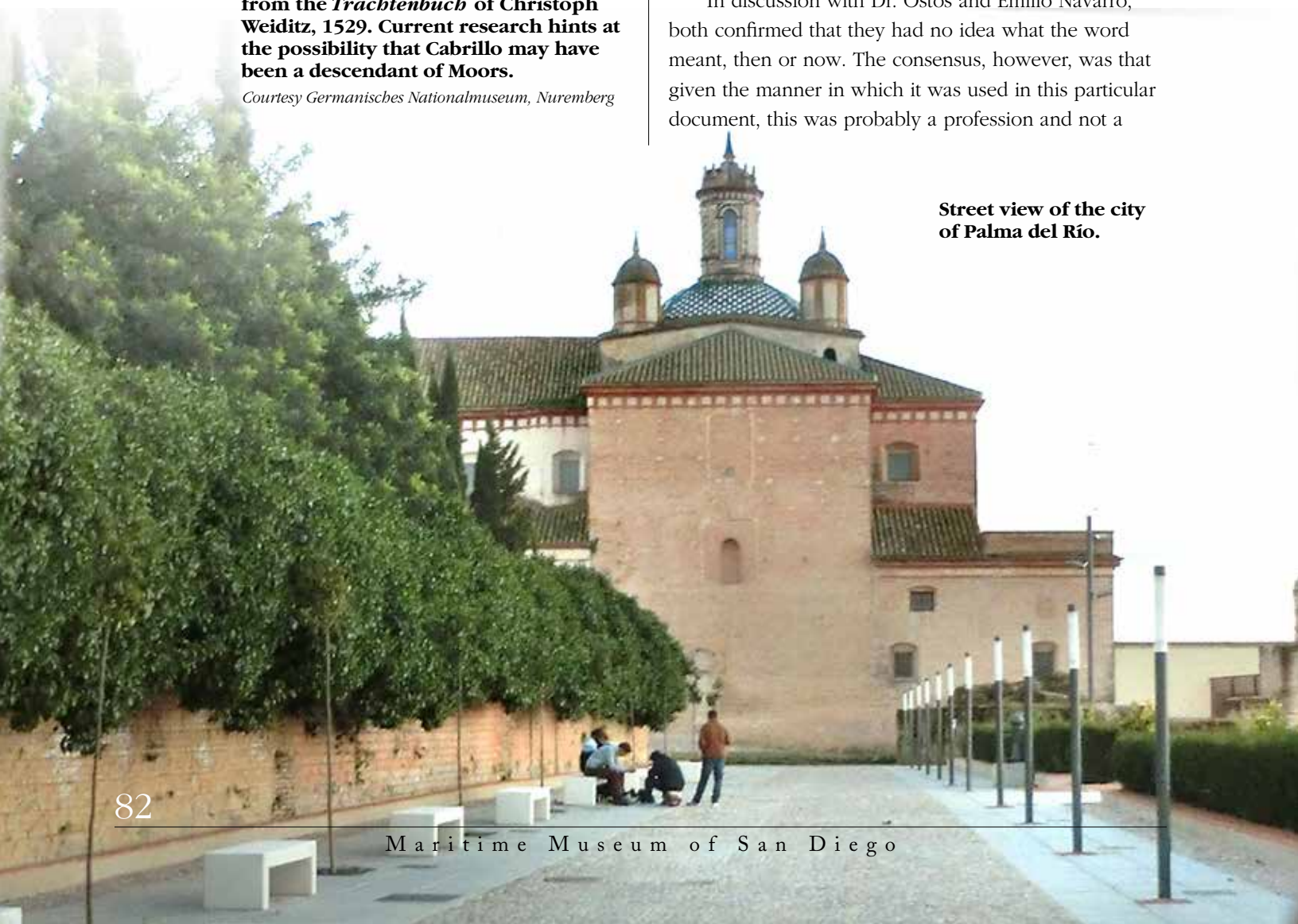
Moriscos of the kingdom of Granada from the *Trachtenbuch* of Christoph Weiditz, 1529. Current research hints at the possibility that Cabrillo may have been a descendant of Moors.

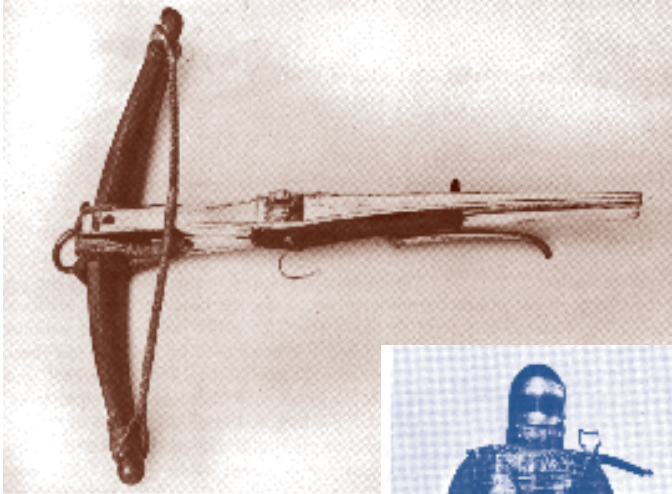
Courtesy Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg

from that period had turned up no information, but one of them, Emilio J. Navarro, thought to share with me some digital copies of the history journal *Ariadna*, which is published in Palma. In one of the journal articles, the word “cabrillo” appears in a document dated August 7, 1515.⁴⁶ This article has to do with documents about the proceedings of the meetings of a charitable society called the Hospital of San Sebastián in Palma del Río, and was written and transcribed by the paleographer and historian from the University of Seville, Pilar Ostos Salcedo. The verbatim transcription of the names of the witnesses present at the act of that meeting reads as follows: “Bartolomé de Çamora, labrador, e Diego Rodríguez, barbero, e Alfonso Gómez, cabrillo, vezynos desta dicha villa” (Bartolome Zamora, laborer, and Diego Rodríguez, barber and Alfonso Gómez, *cabrillo*, residents of this town).⁴⁷ In other words, the three witnesses stated their occupations after their names and one of them was a “*cabrillo*.” This document is housed in the Municipal Archive in Palma del Río.⁴⁸

In discussion with Dr. Ostos and Emilio Navarro, both confirmed that they had no idea what the word meant, then or now. The consensus, however, was that given the manner in which it was used in this particular document, this was probably a profession and not a

Street view of the city of Palma del Río.





Above: An early sixteenth century crossbow. Historical sources indicate that Cabrillo was an experienced crossbowman and he would have been armed with this type of weapon while serving in the campaign against the Aztecs.

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

Right: Clothing and arms of Spanish infantry and crossbowmen from the early sixteenth century.

Courtesy Real Armería, Madrid



so much so that in documents written during his lifetime and that of his children, it is often misspelled as “Cabrilla” or “Cabrillas.”⁴⁹ Not long ago, however, we received some very encouraging news: the official historian of Palma del Río, Manuel Muñoz Rojo, mentioned that he had found published articles with the medieval surname “Cabrillo” among families of *moriscos* in several locations around Spain. And thanks to this finding, we can now

also state that “Cabrillo” was a *morisco* surname.⁵⁰

The context in which he uses the word “*cabrillo*” during his statements gives the impression that he is referring to his profession and not to his surname, and it is only later that he begins to use it as a surname. The Spanish historian Juan Gil noted that: “professions and surnames often meld into one,” and “this ambiguity of linguistic usage often makes it difficult to gain a clear understanding



surname. Therefore, it appears that Cabrillo did not invent a word to use it as his surname, something that has been hypothesized, but rather employed a known word, that a contemporary of his from his hometown used as the name of his profession in 1515. We can only speculate as to what type of profession “*cabrillo*” was but it may have been something related to the work of a crossbowman or shipwright, two professions practiced by Cabrillo.

This was the first time we had ever come across the word *cabrillo* in the sixteenth century that was not in the context of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo himself or members of his immediate family. Certainly, it was a word that he and his descendants used as a surname, but it was an extremely unusual surname,

Caulking a vessel in late 1520s from Christoph Weiditz’s *Trachtenbuch*. Cabrillo’s contribution both as crossbowman and shipbuilder in the service of Hernán Cortés is well known. Historians are currently unclear on the precise meaning of the name “Cabrillo,” or why Juan Rodríguez of Palma del Río chose to call himself by this name, and speculate on a possible connection between his name, ethnicity, birthplace, and trade.

Courtesy Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg



of the term.”⁵¹ It seems that we are in just such a situation, and that we cannot be sure whether Cabrillo is a profession, a surname, or both. Grammatically in Spanish, the sentence is ambiguous, he could have been saying either that this was his other surname or that this was his profession.

It is worth noting that whenever “Juan Rodríguez” declared that he was a “native of Palma de Micer Gilio,” the word “cabrillo” preceded that sentence, appended immediately after his name “Juan Rodríguez.” Thus, the place of birth appears only together with the word “cabrillo.” It is notable that whenever he said he was an *escudero* or merchant, he never mentioned his birthplace. Which does beg the question, was he perhaps saying he was a “cabrillo” from Palma de Micer Gilio? Could it be that the extremely tense circumstances of the voyage between Veracruz and Spain created the conditions for Juan Rodriguez to want to identify himself as a person with a profession in his native land, a “cabrillo” from Palma? Could that have been his or his father’s profession, one that he later started to use as a surname to distinguish him from others, especially as he did not wish to be referred to as “Rodríguez de Palma” with all that implied? Or could it be that because of the harrowing circumstances onboard the *San Juan* he was forced to reveal this other surname, part of his lineage, in a bid to tell the whole truth in the presence of the authorities? The fact that the surname is the same as that of known *moriscos*, together with how uncommon it was, could suggest that this son of Palma de Micer Gilio had Moorish origins.⁵²

What we do know for certain, and have no need to hypothesize about, is that Cabrillo’s trajectory in Spanish America was extraordinary. In part, Cabrillo stood out because of his successes, the businesses he was involved with and the abundance of documents he left behind. But he also stood out because of the wide variety of names and professions he had. For now, all we can do is admire his achievements and point out the obvious: he was a man of intelligence, energy, ambition, skill and perseverance. Conqueror, crossbowman, shipwright, *encomendero*, slave owner, miner, merchant, squire (*escudero*), *justicia mayor* of Acajutla, master of the shipyard, owner and builder of seven or eight ships, father of five children, partner of an Indigenous woman and husband of a Spanish one, admiral and explorer, born in Palma del Río, resident in Guatemala, and met his death in 1543 during his voyage of exploration of the coast of lower and upper California.

Notes

- 1 Kelsey opens his book with the statement that he has not given a fully conclusive answer to that intriguing question, where was Cabrillo born? See Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, Foreword.
- 2 See Appendix M for the facsimile and the transcription of this key document.
- 3 Cited by journalist Peter Rowe, in “Scholar claims world is wrong about Cabrillo,” *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, June 21, 2016.
- 4 Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 99-100.
- 5 Mario Góngora, *Los grupos de conquistadores en Tierra Firme, 1509-1530. Fisonomía histórico-social de un tipo de conquista* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria, S.A., 1962), 71, 76. Góngora was unable to identify the town of Palma de Micer Gilio, and said that this man’s place of origin was “indeterminate, because the place is not known.”
- 6 He requested a permit to sell an olive grove and a vineyard registered in El Higueral to be able to afford the costs of his upcoming trip to *Tierra Firme*. Franciscan monk Juan Cabedo or Juan de Quevedo was the first Bishop of Panama (1513-1519), and on April 11, 1514 he left for the New World in the expedition led by Pedrarias Dávila. Pilar Ostos Salcedo, “Documentos del Hospital de San Sebastián de Palma del Río (1509-1519),” *Ariadna, Revista de Investigación* 12 (Dic. 1993), 77-80. Thanks to Manuel Muñoz Rojo for sharing this reference with me.
- 7 The legal proceedings arising from those disputes produced hundreds of pages of documents. See Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*, 4.
- 8 The term “converso” refers to Jews who converted to Christianity, while “morisco” refers only to Moors who converted to Christianity.
- 9 James Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca: A social and biographical study of the first conquerors of Peru* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1972), 36-37. Regarding Peru, Lockhart wrote that for now, “[A]t most one can voice the suspicion that New Christians were indeed present, not restricted to any conventional role, but distributed in a variety of functions. It would be natural enough for some conversos to be found in a group dominated by petty hidalgos, subprofessionals, and substantial commoners.”
- 10 As noted by Juan Gil, the renowned expert on the *conversos* in the Province of Seville, “New Christians ... preferred to live clandestinely under the protection of great aristocrats: it is a proven fact that, whether deliberately or instinctively, minorities supported each other, irrespective of their social condition or status, which was in their interest as they faced the danger brought by increasing royal power.” Juan Gil, *Los Conversos y la Inquisición Sevillana: El distrito y sus hombres*, Vol. VI (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, Fundación del Monte, 2003), 55.
- 11 “The desperate situation of *conversos* on the Peninsula made it easier to recruit people who were ready to embark on a voyage to parts unknown.” See “Inmigración ‘ilegal’ de Conversos a la Nueva España,” Alicia Gojman Goldberg, *Memoria del II Congreso de Historia del Derecho Mexicano* (México: UNAM, 1981), 182.
- 12 María del Carmen Mena García, *Un linaje de conversos en tierras americanas: los testamentos de Pedrarias Dávila, gobernador de Castilla del Oro y Nicaragua* (León: Universidad de León, 2004).
- 13 Eva Alexandra Uchmany, “The participation of New Christians and Crypto-Jews in the conquest, colonization, and trade of Spanish America, 1521-1660,” in *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West: 1450-1800*, ed. Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering (Berghahn Books: New York and Oxford, 2001), 188-189.
- 14 Antonio García-Abásolo, “Epílogo” in Kramer, *El español que exploró California*, 164-165.
- 15 According to Taboada, converted Jews would have had more reasons for hiding their origins. But if we look at the trials of the Inquisition, the number targeting “suspected Moors” is small and these statistics are revealing. It has even been said that in contrast to examples of Judaism, the examples of Islamism in the Indies triggered more curiosity than fury. See Taboada, “El moro en las Indias,” 121.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 117.
- 17 Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca*, 35, notes: “... imperial directives to exclude such people [Moors, Jews and Blacks] from the Indies were dead letters, though they did help induce attempts at self-disguise.”

- 18 Gojman Goldberg, "Inmigración 'ilegal' de Conversos a la Nueva España," 181-186. Gojman comments that "Conversos reached New Spain through the Canary Islands, at times incorporating themselves into the retinue of a Lord [señor] who was traveling there, as he would request a permit for himself and his servants. This must have been a very common occurrence as the laws of the Indies [had to] specify and insist that 'permits for servants will not be sold and no one may travel under the name of another.'"
- 19 Taboada, "El moro en las Indias," 115-116. Regretably, while I was carrying out my research for the Spanish edition of this book I did not have access to Karoline P. Cook's groundbreaking study: the first book to document and discuss the impact of the Morisco population in colonial Latin America. See *Forbidden passages: Muslims and Moriscos in Colonial Spanish America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).
- 20 James Lockhart, *Spanish Peru, 1532-1560: A Colonial Society* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 197.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 196-197. Lockhart mentions that *morisco* slaves "were highly valuable artisans or trusted bodyguards. Probably the explanation for the rarity of morisco men is that it was easy for a man who looked and talked like any other Spaniard to throw off his slavery in the wide reaches of the Indies." Lockhart remarks that one of the members of the Town Council of Lima who was also an *encomendero* was alleged to be an escaped *morisco* slave.
- 22 Lockhart, *Men of Cajamarca*, 146.
- 23 AGI, Justicia 286, N.4, R.2, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, vecino de Santiago de Guatemala contra Francisco de la Cueva, fol. 212. A witness declared that "at many different times he had seen a *morisco* belonging to don Francisco bring wheat with a pack of mules, and he said that it was from the farmlands of Jumaytepeque."
- 24 During the proceedings for his Judicial review, Governor Pedro de Alvarado said that he had helped Eugenio de Moscoso and had given him money for the trip home because he wished to return to his wife's side in Spain. However, according to other witnesses at the time, Moscoso had won a lot of money gambling and he wanted to go to Peru, so he sold his *encomienda* town to Alvarado for 1,500 *pesos*, and bought himself some horses, some Black slaves and a *morisca* and then left. AGI, Justicia 295, Residencia de Pedro de Alvarado, fols. 230v-231, 343v-344, 366v.
- 25 Lockhart, *Spanish Peru*, 197.
- 26 Eva Alexandra Uchmany, "De algunos cristianos nuevos en la conquista y colonización de la Nueva España," *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* (1985), 266.
- 27 Jorge de Alvarado, Governor Alvarado's brother who also served as his lieutenant, was married to the daughter of Alonso de Estrada and Marina Gutiérrez de la Caballería. Although Estrada's origins were open to question, Marina "belonged to the ranks of the *converso* elite of Aragon." Gudrun Lenkersdorf, *Génesis histórica de Chiapas 1522-1532: El conflicto entre Portocarrero y Mazariégos* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1993), 59-60.
- 28 Uchmany, "De algunos cristianos nuevos," 266, 271.
- 29 Juan Gil, *Los Conversos y la Inquisición Sevillana, Ensayo de prosopografía*, Vol. III (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, Fundación el Monte, 2001), 120-124, 462-464.
- 30 Taboada, "El moro en las Indias," 120.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 119.
- 32 Bernard Grunberg, "Les premiers juifs mexicains (1521-1571)," *Revue des Études Juives* CXLV, 3-4, (juill.-déc. 1986), 361.
- 33 AGI, Guatemala 9A, R.19, N.80, Carta de los licenciados Cerrato y Ramírez, 24 de marzo, 1551.
- 34 AGI, Guatemala 9A, R.19, N.82, Carta del licenciado Cerrato, 25 de mayo, 1552.
- 35 AGI, Guatemala 9A, R.22, N.88, Carta de la Audiencia de Guatemala, 21 de abril, 1556.
- 36 Juan Gil, *Los Conversos y la Inquisición Sevillana: El distrito y sus bombres*, Vol. VI, 129. Gil is citing Simón de Pineda here, a "*linajudo*" who made this comment in 1644. *Linajudos* were genealogists in charge of examining the bloodlines of persons seeking royal positions and favors, who in turn had to prove that they did not descend from converted Jews. See the fascinating study by Ruth Pike on this topic, *Linajudos and Conversos in Seville: Greed and Prejudice in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Spain* (New York, N.Y.: Lang, 2000).
- 37 Thomas, *Who's who of the Conquistadors* (London: Cassell, 2000), xxii-xxiii. For example, of 966 men who arrived with Narváez, about 314 had place names as surnames.
- 38 Uchmany, "De algunos cristianos nuevos," 313.
- 39 For a discussion of Hernando Alonso and two other men accused of practicing Jewish rituals in New Spain, see Grunberg, "Les premiers juifs mexicains," 363-368. Grunberg mentions the wealth of materials for studies on the *conversos* in the *Archivo General de la Nación* in Mexico City and in its collection of Inquisition documents.
- 40 Uchmany, "The participation of New Christians," 191. Lenkersdorf, *Génesis Histórica de Chiapas*, 61-63.
- 41 Grunberg, "Les premiers juifs mexicains," 364. Evidently, Hernando Alonso was accused of performing a Jewish baptism ritual on his infant son when he lived in Santo Domingo, and his accomplice, according to witnesses, was a certain person named "Palma." Claudio Guillén notes that, "It is glaringly obvious, furthermore, that many conversos from Seville during the sixteenth century were called Palma or de la Palma." See "Un padrón de conversos sevillanos (1510)," *Bulletin Hispanique* 65:1-2, (1963), 82. See also Juan Gil and his list of *conversos* named "Palma" or "de la Palma," in *Los Conversos y la Inquisición Sevillana, Ensayo de prosopografía* (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, Fundación el Monte, 2001), Vol. V, 15-31.
- 42 "We know that when Jews and Moors were baptized in Spain, they took the names and surnames of their godparents." Guillén, "Un padrón de conversos sevillanos," 75.
- 43 Gil, *Los Conversos y la Inquisición Sevillana: Ensayo de Prosopografía*, Vol. III, 60.
- 44 Lockhart, *Spanish Peru*, 81. Lockhart noted that this ideal scenario for a relationship of trust between merchants in Peru and the Peninsula was rarely achieved, and could include the holding of the new wife's dowry in Spain as additional security for the good behavior of the merchant son-in-law.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 77. Lockhart says that in Peru, "No merchants became *encomenderos* except through devious means. Even in the first few years of the conquest, when miracles of social mobility were being performed, most merchants went about their business, neither claiming nor receiving *encomiendas* ..."
- 46 Ostos Salcedo, "Documentos del Hospital de San Sebastián," 87-88. Ostos notes that these documents are concerned with economic and financial matters and are the contracts between the hospital and the citizens of Palma del Río and Peñaflor, to do with the administration of the hospital's properties.
- 47 Professor Ostos added the capital letters, punctuation and accents, as sixteenth century script had no strict rules of grammar.
- 48 I would like to thank the Director of the Archive in Palma del Río, Antonio León Lillo for letting me consult the original document and for providing me with a scanned copy. The citation for this document is A.M.P.R., H.S.S., Leg. 31, doc. n. 7, el 7 de agosto, 1515.
- 49 AHPS, Protocolos notariales, Signatura: 1440, Francisco Núñez de Illescas y Luis Sánchez Dalvo, otorgan poder a Francisco Marroquín, obispo de Guatemala, a Cristóbal de Salvatierra y a Pedro de Ovid, para que solicitasen de los herederos de Juan Rodríguez Cabrillas [sic], la entrega de los 700 y tantos pesos de oro que les había dejado a deber por ciertas herramientas que le vendieron. 29 de octubre de 1551, fol. 1814.
- 50 In examining part of the *magnum opus* of Juan Gil, in particular his prosopographic study of the *conversos* of the province of Seville, it must be noted that the surname "Cabrillo" does not appear on any of the lists of names of converted Jews nor was it a *morisco* surname used by *conversos*, an occurrence which Gil has documented in his book.
- 51 Gil, *Los Conversos y la Inquisición Sevillana: El distrito y sus bombres*, vol. VI, 66-67.
- 52 The chronicler of Palma del Río, Manuel Muñoz Rojo, notes that new avenues of research are opening up all the time and that it will not be long before they discover Cabrillo's lineage and what the word "*cabrillo*" means.

Afterword

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo is one of the great explorers of the Americas and a seminal figure in the history of California. As of 2015, he has also unquestionably become part of the story of the Spanish town of Palma del Río. This is thanks to the ground-breaking research of the historian Wendy Kramer. Cabrillo had long been regarded in some quarters as a Portuguese navigator. Recent biographies cast doubt on this claim, but definitive proof of his origins had been lacking until 2015. Archival evidence provided by Dr. Kramer has now solved the mystery of Cabrillo's place of birth by proving beyond a doubt that he was a Spaniard, born in the village of Palma de Micer Gilio – modern-day Palma del Río.

Dr. Kramer made public her finding when she identified Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo as the same person who described himself as Juan Rodríguez de Palma and Juan Rodríguez, from the village of Palma de Micer Gilio. Her extensive knowledge of the sixteenth-century New World, particularly of the *encomenderos* of Central America, and her career as a researcher in the Archive of the Indies (Seville), the General Archive of Central America (Guatemala), and the Hispanic Society of America (New York), led her to the essential documents that allowed her to declare conclusively that the explorer of California presented himself before the authorities as a native of Palma del Río.

What do we know of Palma del Río, Cabrillo's home town? The original village of Palma was founded on the right bank of the river Genil, where it flows into the Guadalquivir. The Romans named the surrounding fertile region Baetica, and populated it extensively, founding municipalities, hamlets and agricultural villages.¹ The present-day municipality of Palma is located on the ancient Roman municipalities of Detumo and Segida Augurina. Roman agriculture would come to include the cultivation of olive groves, cereal crops and vineyards. The Romans also developed a local ceramic industry, with the manufacture of storage jars called *amphorae*. These were used for the transportation of olive oil to Rome via river and sea.

During the Islamic period starting in the Eighth Century, the region's irrigation system was refined with large water wheels placed in diversion dams. The Moors also developed the cultivation of citrus fruits and a more effective employment of *pagos de huerta* (agricultural communities of farmhands) located next to a settlement called Balmat.² Under the Almohad Caliphate the village was fortified, first with a castle (*alcázar*) that was later expanded to include large walls with eleven towers.³

The Reconquest occurred in the year 1231, when Fernando III, called the Saint, was king of Castile. Given the privileged location of the village of Palma, geographic epicenter of the reconquered Andalucía, several meetings of the General Brotherhood of Andalucía took place in its fortified facility between 1297 and 1313.⁴ In 1342,

the village of Palma, of the kingdom and diocese of Córdoba, was granted to Admiral Egidio Bocanegra under the feudal system. By royal decree on January 23, 1451, King Juan II of Castile gave Martín Fernández Portocarrero, sixth lord of Palma, the right to hold a tax-exempt fifteen-day market, taking place annually in August. At the end of the Middle Ages and the fifteenth century, the powerful feudal estate of Palma was under the seventh lord of the village, Luis Portocarrero Bocanegra (1450-1503). This was the era during which Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was born.

The initial phase of the European conquest and settlement of the Americas occurred over barely fifty years between 1492 and 1542. Among the protagonists of this historic epic are Hernán Cortés, Pedro Arias de Ávila (Pedrarias Dávila), Francisco Pizarro, Diego de Almagro, Pedro de Alvarado, Vasco Núñez de Balboa, Alonso de Ojeda and Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, explorer of California. All of them were Spaniards, but for reasons we do not know, royal chronicler Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas added "Portuguese" after the name Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo. Dr. Kramer's research shows definitively that Cabrillo was a Spaniard.

Dr. Kramer's book is divided into six chapters, each focusing on an aspect of the career of this conquistador from Palma del Río. The author leads us through the paths of history, document by document, using a methodical and systematic approach to reveal previously unknown details of Cabrillo's life and work. This is not a novel, although at times it reads like one. This is the true story of a soldier; a carpenter in the conquest of Mexico; an explorer and shipowner in Central America; one of the first fifty citizens of Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala; an *encomendero* of Guatemalan towns and lands; a shipbuilder; a merchant in Central America and Peru; and an admiral and Captain General of the expedition to California in 1542. This is Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, from the village of Palma de Micer Gilio, modern-day Palma del Río.

Manuel Muñoz Rojo, Ph.D.
Official historian of Palma del Río

Notes

- 1 Ambrosio de Torres y Orden, *Palma Ilustrada* (Sevilla: Imprenta del Dr. D. Gerónimo de Castilla, 1774), 1-2.
- 2 Emilio J. Navarro Martínez, *Castillos y fortalezas del Valle medio del Guadalquivir* (Córdoba: Editorial Séneca, 2015), 99-100.
- 3 Mercedes Valverde Candil and Felipe Toledo Ortiz, *Los castillos de Córdoba* (Córdoba: Caja Provincial de Ahorros and Asociación de Amigos de Córdoba, 1987), 215-218.
- 4 Manuel García Fernández, "La Hermandad General de Andalucía durante la minoría de Alfonso XI de Castilla, 1312-1325," *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español* (1979), 356.

APPENDIX

A - AMPR, HSS., Leg.31, Doc.7. Rodrigo de Écija, administrator of the Hospital of the *Cuerpo de Dios* in Palma del Río, takes possession of a store purchased from Diego de Perea. Dated in Palma (del Río) on August 7, 1515.

B - AGI, Justicia 1159, N.5. Excerpt of the testimony given by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, native of Palma de Micer Gilio, before judges in the criminal case regarding the theft of His Majesty's gold. Dated in Cádiz, February 12, 1532, image 92 [transcription 92-94].

C - AGI, Justicia 706, N.4. Testimony given by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, native of Palma de Micer Gilio. He states that he is 35 years old and that he came over on the ship the *San Juan* from Veracruz. Dated in Cádiz, February 22, 1532, image 500 [transcription 500-511].

D - AGI, Justicia 707, N.6. Excerpt of a formal petition for the recovery of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo's gold. Dated in Cádiz, February 22, 1532, image 25 [transcription 25-26].

E - AGI, Justicia 706, N.4. Excerpt of the proof presented by the legal representative (of the city) Gabriel de Cabrera, regarding the theft of His Majesty's share of gold that he was bringing from Guatemala. Dated in Cádiz, [February] 1532, image 141.

F - AHPS, Sección Protocolos Notariales. Signatura: 6685-P.* Juan Rodríguez grants a power of attorney to Alonso Sánchez de Ortega. Dated in Seville, March 13, 1532 [2 folios].

G - AGI, Justicia 707, N.6. Alonso Sánchez de Ortega, merchant from Seville, presents the record of the gold registered by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo on the ship the *San Juan*. Dated in Seville, March 22, 1532, image 30.

H - AGI, Guatemala 393, L.1. Royal decree from the Queen that states that Juan Rodríguez de Palma left Spain in the armada to Tierra Firme, under Pedrarias Dávila and also that she is granting him a reduction in the customs tax. Dated in Medina del Campo, May 24, 1532, image 41.

I - AGI, Guatemala 393, L.1. Royal decree from the Queen regarding the grant of a league of land in the Tianguecillo Valley in Guatemala to Juan Rodríguez de Palma. Dated in Medina del Campo, May 24, 1532, image 38 [transcription 38-39].

J - AHPS, Sección Protocolos Notariales. Signatura: 42-P.* Juan Rodríguez, merchant and citizen of the city of Santiago, grants a signed power of attorney to Antonio de Luisi. Dated in Seville, August 5, 1532 [2 folios].

K - AGCA, A1.20. Leg.732. Document that certifies the formation of a partnership between Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo and Pedro Hernández Picón to transport nine horses from the Lempa River to Peru. Dated in Santiago (Guatemala), January 9, 1538, folios 180v-181r.

L - AGCA, A1.20. Leg.732. Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo signs a contract granting authority to Juan Cansino to be the master of his ship the *San Juan*. Dated in Santiago (Guatemala), January 17, 1538, folios 168r-169r.

M - AGCA, A1.20. Leg.732. Juan Rodríguez charts his ship the *San Salvador* to Juan Gómez Camacho, for voyages to Peru [January 1538], folio 181v.

N - AGCA, A1.2.4. Leg.2195, Exp.15749. Royal decree from His Majesty in which he nullifies the land grant in the Panchoy Valley given to Juan Rodríguez de Palma. Dated in Guadalajara (Spain), October 11, 1546, folio 342.

Appendix A

Municipal Archive of Palma del Río, HSS., Leg.31, Doc.7. Rodrigo de Eçija, administrator of the Hospital of the *Cuerpo de Dios* in Palma del Río, takes possession of a store purchased from Diego de Perea. Dated in Palma (del Río) on August 7, 1515.

The document confirms the purchase of a store in the main square. The buyer is Rodrigo de Eçija, administrator of the Body of God (*Cuerpo de Dios*) who buys it in the name of that hospital. The vendor is Diego de Perea, on behalf of the owners of the store, the Medina family. But, the buyer finds that the store is occupied by a rental tenant, Alfonso Çisbón. The buyer Rodrigo de Eçija expells the renter Çisbón and takes over the store. All the terms of the purchase and expulsion of the renter are collected in this document by the public notary of the town of Palma, Diego de Eçija. The act takes place in front of three witnesses who all state their full names and occupations. One of them Alfonso Gómez says that he is a “cabrillo.” This document is the only evidence we have found that “cabrillo” was some sort of occupation. Another curious bit of information to point out is that “Çisbón” is a Jewish surname and is associated with a well-known merchant family in Seville at this time.

Original in Spanish below.

Archivo Municipal de Palma del Río, AMPR-HSS., Leg.31, Doc.7. Rodrigo de Eçija, mayordomo del hospital del Cuerpo de Dios de Palma del Río, toma posesión de una tienda, situada en la Plaza de dicha villa, que había comprado a Diego de Perea, vecino de Palma del Río, en nombre del bachiller Martín de Medina y de sus hermanos Diego de Medina y Mayor de Medina, vecinos de Sevilla. Palma del Río, 7 de agosto, 1515.¹

1 Transcription is adapted from Pilar Ostos Salcedo, “Documentación del Hospital de San Sebastián de Palma del Río (1509-1519)” in *Ariadna, Revista de Investigación* 12 (dic. 1993), 87-88.

Sepan quantos esta carta vieren commo en la villa de Palma, martes, syete días del mes de agosto, año del Nasçimiento de nuestro Saluador Iesu Christo de mill e quinientos e quinze años. En este día, estando lide e delante de las puertas de vna tyenda, que es en la plaça desta villa, linde con tyenda de San Sevastyán e con casas de Alfonso de Palma, fijo de Miguell Sánchez de Alcáraz,

Rodrigo de Eçija, mayordomo del espital del Cuerpo //3v de Dios desta villa, y en nonbre del dicho espital, en presençia de mí Diego de Eçija, escriuano público desta dicha villa, e de los testygos de yuso escritos que y fue venido a ruego e pedimiento del dicho Rodrigo de Eçija para le dar fe e testimonio de lo que y viesse e oyese e de los dichos testygos pasase.

Luego, el dicho Rodrigo de Eçija dixo a mí, el dicho escriuano, que bien sabía commo oy dicho día, en mi presençia, él avía conprado la dicha tyenda de suso alindada y en la carta de vendita que le fue otorgada por Diego de Perea, en nombre del bachiller Martín de Medina e de Diego de

Medina e de Mayor de Medina, sus sobrinos, cuya era la dicha tyenda, le fue dado poder para tomar la posesyón della e quel era venido allí para la tomar. E poniéndolo en obra, entró dentro en la dicha tyenda e andovo por ella e alançó fuera della a Alfonso Çisbón, alquilador que la tenía, e cerró sobre sy las puertas de contra la calle e abríolas.

Todo lo qual dixo que fazya en señal e aprehensyón de verdadera posesyón para el dicho ospital. La qual dicha posesyón tomó paçífica e quietamente, syn contradición de presona alguna que y pareçiese a la contradezyr. E pidiólo por testymonio.

Testygos: Bartolomé de Çamora, labrador, e Diego Rodríguez, barvero, e Alfonso Gómez, cabrillo, vezynos desta dicha villa.

E porque los testygos no sabían escrevir, no firmó en el registro ninguno dellos.

E yo Diego de Eçija, escriuano público de Palma por el conde, mi señor, a lo susodicho fuy presente e la escreuy e fize aquí mío syg-(*signo*)no e so testy



Appendix B

General Archive of the Indies, Seville, Section Justicia 1159, N.5. Excerpt of the testimony given by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, native of Palma de Micer Gilio, before judges in the criminal case regarding the theft of His Majesty's gold. Dated in Cadiz, February 12, 1532, image 92 [transcription 92-94].

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo appears before justices in the city of Cadiz on February 12, 1532 to give testimony regarding the theft of His Majesty's gold aboard a ship that set sail from Veracruz (Mexico). In this sworn testimony Rodríguez Cabrillo states, for the first recorded time, that he is a native of Palma de Micer Gilio (Palma del Río). In answer to the extensive list of questions Cabrillo swears that Gabriel de Cabrera, legal representative of the city of Santiago de Guatemala, handed two crates with His Majesty's gold to the boatswain Pedro Ochoa for safe keeping. In his testimony Rodríguez Cabrillo describes the first location of the crates on the ship and how they were subsequently moved by the boatswain. Rodríguez Cabrillo also details that while awaiting the departure of the ship he went with Gabriel de Cabrera to get food supplies and that during some of the voyage Cabrera was extremely seasick.

Original in Spanish below.

Archivo General de Indias, Justicia, 1159, N.5. Extracto de un testimonio que dio Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, natural de Palma de Micer Gilio, delante de los señores jueces en el juicio sobre el oro de Su Magestad. Cádiz, 12 de febrero de 1532, imgs. 92-94.

E luego los dichos señores Juezes mandaron paresçer ante si a un onbre que se dixo por nonbre Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo natural de Palma de Meçigilio e del tomaron y resçibieron juramento en forma de derecho e le fizieron las preguntas siguientes.

Preguntado que si conoce a Graviel [Gabriel] de Cabrera dixo que si por que vinieron desde Guaçacalco hasta la Vera Cruz juntos donde se embarcaron en una nao.

Preguntado que si conoce al piloto e contra maestre e despensero dixo que si desde este viaje.

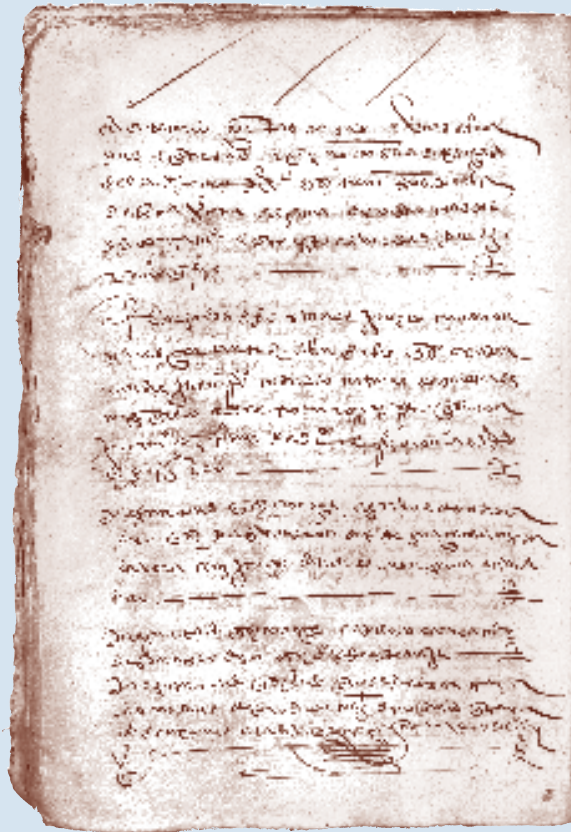
Preguntado que si vido que el dicho Cabrera traya dos caxones de oro de su magestad dixo que vido que traya dos caxones atado uno con otro que traya oro del Rey [img.93].

Preguntado que de que manera los traya dixo que los traya los dichos caxones enbultos en lienços de la tierra cosydos e clavados e liados con cordeles de muchas bueltas asido uno con otro en unas esparihuelas e con un cordel conplido atados como una boya para que a caso el barco donde entrasen se hanegase el oro se salvase e desta manera los traya.

Preguntado que si a bisto que desta manera se aya traydo otras vezes oro de su magestad dixo que si destas propia manera se trae e lo a visto traer.

Preguntado que si bido o sabe que el dicho Gabriel de Cabrera embarcase e metiese en la dicha nao en el puerto de San Juan de Ulua los dichos dos caxones de oro atados e adereçados como dicho tiene e a quien los dio y entrego en la dicha nao dixo que sabe e vido que yiendo el dicho Cabrera en un barco e alli los caxones vino en el batel de la nao Pero Ochoa contra maestre della en el batel e alli embarco los dichos dos caxones de oro como venian en una caja de otro pasajero y este testigo y el dicho Cabrera se entraron en el batel e se fueron a la nao y entraron dentro della e alli el dicho Cabrera [img.94] dixo al dicho contra maestre Pero Ochoa que aquellos caxones heran oro de Su Magestad que los pusiese en cobro hasta que el piloto que estaba en la Vera Cruz viniese y el dicho contra maestre dixo a Cabrera se los meteria en su caja e Cabrera le dixo que antes le haria merced y el dicho contra maestre tomo los

dichos dos caxones liados e atados como dicho tiene e los metio en su caja e asimismo una petaca con escripturas e joyas de oro que el dicho Cabrera traya e despues del contra maestre aver guardado el dicho oro e joyas se fueron a la Veracruz a se proveer de matalotaje este testigo e Cabrera y estuvieron alli en la Veracruz quatro o cinco dias hasta que despues se vinyeron a embarcar en la dicha nao e despues de embarcados estovieron en el puerto otros dos o tres dias antes que partiesen e yendo por la mar desde a otros quatro dias el dicho Pero Ochoa contra maestre saco de su caja los dichos dos caxones de oro e las puso sobre cubierta al pie del cabestante e le fue a dezir al dicho Cabrera que estaba almadiado de la mar que guardase los dos caxones de oro y el dicho Cabrera le respondió que los tubiese en su caja como los abia tenido que el no tenia donde ponelles (...)



Appendix C

General Archive of the Indies, Seville, Section Justicia 706, N.4. Testimony given by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, native of Palma de Micer Gilio. He states that he is 35 years old and that he came over on the ship the *San Juan* from Veracruz. Dated in Cadiz, February 22, 1532, image 500 [transcription 500-511].

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo swears and gives testimony before justices in the city of Cadiz, and declares that he is a native of Palma de Micer Gilio (Palma del Río) and that he is thirty-five years old. Rodríguez Cabrillo (as well as all the other witnesses), are subjected to twenty-six questions regarding events that occurred during the voyage of the ship the *San Juan* from Veracruz (Mexico) to Cadiz (Spain), and the details of the theft of His Majesty's gold. The main parties involved in this legal proceeding as it unfolds are: the person responsible for transporting the gold, Gabriel de Cabrera; and the two members of the crew accused of the theft, the ship's master, Blas Gallego and the boatswain, Pedro de Ochoa. During the proceedings more details of the voyage are provided, starting from the departure from Veracruz and the docking in the first port of call, Havana. While in Cuba, Gabriel de Cabrera gave the Guatemalan citizen, Eugenio de Moscoso, one hundred *castellanos* (a coin used at that time), for food supplies.

Original in Spanish below.

Archivo General de Indias, Justicia 706, N.4. Testimonio de Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, natural de Palma de Micer Gilio. Dice que tiene 35 años de edad y que vino en la nao *San Juan* desde Veracruz [México]. Cádiz, 22 de febrero, 1532, imgs. 500-511.

[img.500] Testigo Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo natural de Palma de Miçergillo juró en forma de derecho e syendo preguntado por la primera pregunta dixo que conoçe a los en ella contenidos e a cada uno dellos e que a notiçia de la dicha nao porque vino en ella desde la Veracruz de la Nueva España a esta çibdad e que uvo notiçia e conoçimiento de los dos caxones de oro de su magestad e queste testigo es de hedad de treynta e çinco años e que no le [img.501] toca ni atañe nada de lo susodicho e que vença el pleyto quien toviere justiçia etc.

II. A la segunda pregunta dixo que la sabe la dicha pregunta como en ella se contiene preguntado cómo la sabe dixo que porque lo vido asy pasar e este testigo propio vino de Guatimala de la dicha provinçia e esto es verdad etc.

III. A la terçera pregunta dixo que lo

que sabe es que este testigo viniendo de Guatimala a desembarcar al puerto de la Veracruz llegando a Guaçaqualco alcançó a este testigo el dicho Gabriel de Cabrera el qual traya dos caxones çerrados e liados e le dixo él e los que con él venian como traya en los dichos caxones çinco myll castellanos de oro para su magestad e esto es lo que sabe desta pregunta etc.

III. A la quarta pregunta dixo que vido quel dicho Gabriel de Cabrera traya los dichos caxones liados e cosidos e atados uno con otro e bien conçertados como dicho tiene lo alcançó este testigo en Guaçaqualco e desde allí de Guaçalco [sic] este testigo venía e vino en su conpañia de Cabrera hasta el puerto de San Juan de Lua donde se embarcó con ellos e en todo este camino troxo [img.502] los caxones liados e adereçados en como de antes los traya hasta que los entregó a Pero Ochoa contra maestre de la dicha nao e que sabe e vido que desde Guatemala hasta San Juan de Lua ay casy dozientas leguas de rios e mar e tierra e asy mismo el dicho Cabrera traya un cofre con su oro e tres joyas de oro en una petaca lo qual todo junto traya con sygo hasta que lo embarcó segun dicho tiene e esto es verdad e lo vido segun dicho tiene etc.

V. A la quinta pregunta dixo que sabe la dicha pregunta como en ella se contiene preguntado cómo lo sabe dixo que porque asy lo a visto este testigo e es público e notorio etc.

VI. A la sesta pregunta dixo que lo que sabe es que luego quel dicho Cabrera e este testigo llegaron allí a San Juan de Lua en un barco vino a ellos un batel de la dicha nao e dentro dél el dicho Pero Ochoa contra maestre della con çiertos grumetes de la nao e les dixo el dicho Pero Ochoa como Blas Gallego señor de la dicha nao le avia escrito una carta de la Veracruz en que le dezia que aquella noche avia de venir e que a otro dia se avia de partir la dicha nao para estas partes e esto lo vido este testigo por se hallar presente a ello etc.

[img.503] VII. A la setena pregunta dixo que sabe e vido que a la sazón que el dicho Cabrera e este testigo llegaron al dicho puerto de San Juan de Lua no avia otra nao presta para venir a España syno la del dicho Blas Gallego porque lo procuraron e supieron e esto es verdad etc.

VIII. A la otava pregunta dixo que la sabe la dicha pregunta como en ella se contiene preguntado como la sabe dixo que porque este testigo lo vido asy pasar e pasó como la pregunta dize e este testigo hera el pasajero de que en la pregunta se haze mynçion e esto es verdad etc.

IX. A la novena pregunta dixo que lo que sabe es que llegados a la dicha nao

el dicho Cabrera e este testigo estando dentro della el dicho Cabrera le dixo al dicho Pero Ochoa contra maestre como aquellos dos caxones heran de oro de su magestad e que los pusyese en recaudo e el dicho Pero Ochoa le dixo que sy lo echaria en su caxa e el dicho Cabrera le dixo que antes le haria en ello merçed porque estaria a mejor recabdo porque heran çinco myll castellanos e le dio los dos caxones e luego [img.504] le dio una petaca que el dicho Cabrera traya sin çerradura con cartas e despachos para su magestad e asy mismo dentro della tres joyas de oro e le dixo que se lo guardase e el dicho contra maestre tomó los caxones e la petaca en su poder e los caxones estavan muy bien liados e atados e adereçados e juntos el uno con el otro e segund quel dicho Cabrera los traya de Guatemala e el dicho Pero Ochoa contra maestre los metio en su caxa e la dicha petaca con las otras cosas e lo guardó todo e que asy mismo vido que el dicho Cabrera traya un cofre con çierto oro suyo e lo traya syn llave e en Guaçalco [sic] procuró de fazer una llave e no se la açertaron a hazer e en la Veracruz no se la quisieron fazer e syn llave traya el dicho cofre e el dicho oro e el dicho Cabrera llevó a la dicha Veracruz el dicho cofre çerrado para hazer la llave para lo abrir e dél sacar oro para se proveer de mantenimientos e de las cosas que oviese menester para el viaje e en efeto no se abrio ni se le hizo la llave e esto que dicho tiene este testigo lo sabe todo porque lo vido e a todo se halló presente por venir en conpañia del dicho Cabrera desde Guaçaqualco segun dicho tiene e esto es verdad etc.

[img.505] A la diez preguntas dixo que dize lo que dicho tiene e que este testigo vido que al tiempo que el dicho Gabriel de Cabrera entregó el dicho oro al dicho Pero Ochoa contra maestre no pudo fazer más diligençia ninguna de entregarselo e darselo e dezirle que lo guardase e pusyese en recabdo porque hera de su magestad e no podia más hazer porque en la dicha nao no avia otro mandador ni señor en ella syno el dicho contra maestre e lo mismo hiziera este testigo porque no se podia más hazer de lo susodicho ni se podia hazer más diligençia de dar e entregarlo al dicho contra maestre e este testigo lo sabe porque lo vido e se halló presente a ello etc.

XI. A la honzena preguntas dixo que lo que sabe es que al tienpo que el dicho Gabriel de Cabrera entró en la dicha nao no metio en ella caxa alguna por que sy

la metiera este testigo lo viera e se vino desde alli de San Juan de Lua hasta La Havana sin caxa hasta que en la dicha Havana compró una caxa un dia antes que se descubriese el hurto del oro e asimismo vido que [img.506] el dicho Cabrera no tenia camara que en la camara de Moscoso durmia e el dicho cofre de su oro el dicho Cabrera traya en una caxa de Juanes de Açelayn [Celain] marinero e la petaca con las joyas e escrituras la traya este testigo en su poder e esto hasta venir a La Havana e esto este testigo lo sabe porque lo vido e se halló presente a todo etc.

XII. A la doze preguntas dixo que la sabe como en ella se contiene porque en la Veracruz se lo dixo el dicho Cabrera al dicho piloto Blas Gallego e entrando que entró en la nao asimismo se lo dixo e este testigo lo vido e se halló presente a ello e asy es verdad etc.

XIII. A la treze preguntas dixo que la sabe la dicha pregunta como en ella se contiene preguntado cómo lo sabe dixo que porque a este dicho Blas Gallego vido hazer los fletamientos e conçiertos con los pasajeros e él mandava e no avia otro que mandase syno él como señor de la dicha nao e un hombre que se nonbrava maestre de la dicha nao no le vio este testigo [img.507] mandar en cosa más de comer con los marineros pero el dicho Blas Gallego hera el señor e el que governava e mandava e con quien la gente se conçerto e ygaló e este testigo con el dicho Blas Gallego se conçerto e el dicho Cabrera e Diego Sanches e otros pasajeros e al dicho Blas Gallego le pagaron e él se conçerto con ellos e vido que el dicho Cabrera se conçerto con él dicho Blas Gallego de pasaje e venida por treynta e syete pesos de oro e esto es verdad etc.

XIII. A la catorze preguntas dixo que asy lo a oyo dezir a la gente de la nao e quel dicho contra maestre Pero Ochoa hera avido e tenido por contra maestre de la dicha nao e en ella mandava como tal contra maestre e por tal hera avido e tenido e esto es verdad etc.

XV. A la quinze preguntas dixo que asy lo a oyo dezir como la pregunta dize a toda la gente de la dicha nao etc.

XVI. A la diez e seys preguntas dixo que este testigo lo vido a dicho Gabriel de Cabrera despues que partieron de San Juan de Lua çiertos dias almadiado pero este testigo no se acuerda cuántos fueron etc.

XVII. A la diez e syete preguntas dixo que [img.508] sabe la dicha pregunta como en ella se contiene preguntado cómo lo sabe dixo que porque lo vido asy pasar e pasó como la pregunta dize porque este testigo venia dentro de la dicha nao en conpañia del dicho Cabrera etc.

XVIII. A la diez e ocho preguntas dixo que sabe la dicha pregunta como en ella se contiene preguntado cómo lo sabe dixo que porque este testigo lo vido asy pasar como la pregunta dize porque como dicho tiene dentro de la dicha nao en la qual

vido que andovieron por ay çiertos dias los caxones del dicho oro de su magestad e esto es verdad etc.

XIX. A la diez e nueve preguntas dixo que lo que sabe es que estando la dicha nao en el puerto de La Havana e este testigo estando en tierra lo vinieron a llamar a este testigo e a otros pasajeros diziendo que la justia estava en la nao porque se avia hallado abierto un caxon de los dos caxones del oro de su magestad e primero avian llamado a Cabrera el qual avia ya ydo a la nao e ya quando este testigo quiso yr el teniente [img.509] estava en la nao e los caxones en tierra e oyo dezir que se avian abierto los caxones que se se avia hallado menos mill e tantos pesos de oro e esto es lo que sabe desta pregunta etc.

XX. A la veynte preguntas dixo que asy lo sospecha este

testigo e lo cree por lo que dicho tiene por aver hallado los caxones abiertos en la dicha nao e por lo que dicho tienen sobre este caso etc.

XXI. A la veynte e una preguntas dixo que por tal lo tiene este testigo e por tal es avido e tenido en las partes donde él viene e avisto que en este viaje el dicho Cabrera a usado e fecho todo lo que a podido como hombre diligente e por tal lo tiene este testigo etc.

XXII. A la veynte e dos preguntas dixo que dize lo que dicho tiene etc.

XXIII. A la veynte e tres preguntas dixo que asy lo oyo dezir este testigo a algunas personas de la dicha nao e al propio Blas Gallego lo oyo dezir e al dicho Cabrera diziendo quel dicho contra maestre lo avia dicho el qual dicho Pero Ochoa contra maestre dixo a este testigo qué tenía conñança en nuestra [img.510] señora que el oro habia de paresçer en la dicha nao etc.

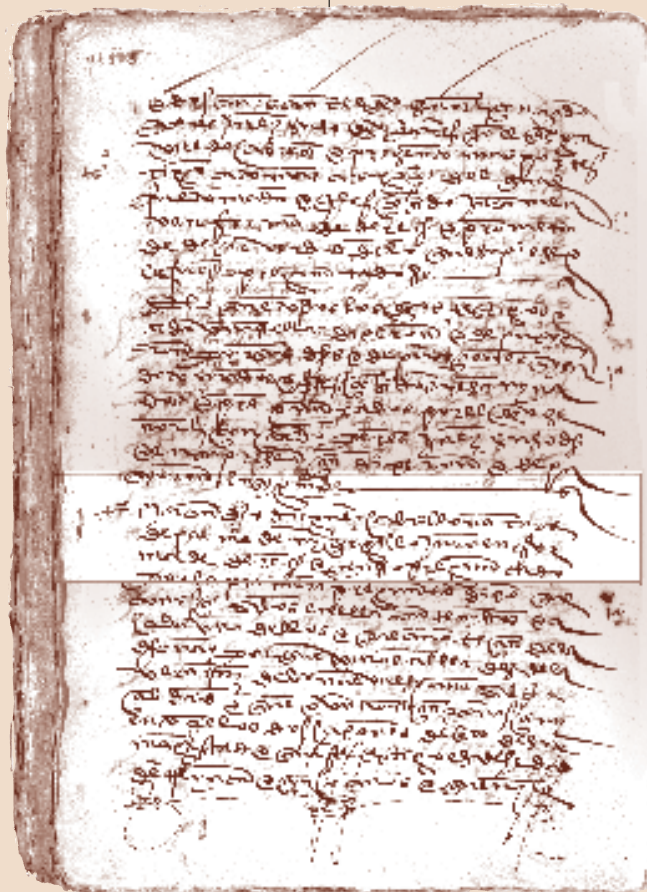
XXIII. A la veynte e quatro preguntas dixo que sabe que todos los que vinieron en la dicha nao estan de partida para yr cada uno por su parte donde

les conenga e asy lo hará este testigo etc.

XXV. A la veynte e çinco preguntas dixo que lo que sabe es que desde a tres dias u quatro que esta dicha nao llegó a La Havana el dicho Cabrera sacó en tierra su cofre de oro çerrado syn llave e alli lo deçerrajó para pagar a Moscoso çiento e tantos castellanos que le devia del matalotaje e para se proveer de lo que habia menester e esto este testigo lo sabe porque lo vido e se halló presente etc.

XXVI. A la veynte e seys preguntas dixo que sabe e vido que en el puerto de La Havana no se sacó oro ninguno por pasajero que este testigo viesse e sy algo se sacara este testigo lo viera e tampoco lo sacó este testigo por ser puerto seguro e sy el dicho Cabrera sacó el suyo fue por lo abrir e pagar lo que devia segun dicho tiene [img.511] e questo es verdad por el juramento que hizo e fymolo de su nonbre e porque este testigo tiene dicho su dicho antes de agora sobre este caso se refiere a lo que dicho tiene e a este que agora dize porque todo es verdad.

Juan Rodríguez



Appendix D

General Archive of the Indies, Seville, Section Justicia 707, N.6. Excerpt of a formal petition for the recovery of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo's gold. Dated in Cadiz, February 22, 1532, image 25 [transcription 25-26].

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, native of Palma de Micer Gilio, took out a loan in Tenerife (Canary Islands) from the crew member Juanes de Celain to purchase provisions and as security he gave him a small piece of gold. His power of attorney, Alonso Sánchez de Ortega (and his future father-in-law), presents before the court his petition and requests the return of the gold bar. The court ordered that Juanes de Celain return the gold bar and in exchange Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo will repay the monies owing.

Original in Spanish below.

Archivo General de Indias, Justicia 707, N.6. Extracto de una petición de Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, natural de Palma de Micer Gilio, sobre la devolución del oro que dio en prenda a Juanes de Celain en Tenerife. Cádiz, 22 de febrero, 1532, imgs. 25-6.

E luego el dicho Alonso Sánchez [de Ortega] en el dicho nonbre presento una ynformaçion la qual es esta que se sygue.

En la muy noble e leal çibdad de Cadiz jueves veynte y dos dias del mes de hebrero año del nascimiento de nuestro salbador chu xpo de mill e quinientos e treynta e dos años ante el noble señor liçençiado Juan Peres teniente de juez de la Casa de la Contrataçion de las Yndias que por mandado de Su Magestad esta e resyde en esta ciudad de Cadiz e en presencia de mi Alonso de Medina escribano publico del numero de la dicha çibdad e escribano de sus magestades e testigos de yuso escriptos parescio presente Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo natural que dixo ser de Palma de Misergillo e dixo que el ovo dado e dio en prendas a Juanes de Çelayn marinero que venia en la nao de Blas Gallego vezino de Sevilla que vino de las Yndias de la Nueva España una barra de oro de diez e nueve quilates sobre veynte e çinco ducados que sobre ella le enpresto e mas sesenta maravedis la qual dicha barra pesa quarenta e tres pesos de oro o çinquenta e tres pesos e por [img.26] que el quiere pagar al dicho Juanes de Çelayn lo que asy le deve sobre la dicha barra de oro pidio a su merçed le mande e premie que se la de e buelba e que es presto de le pagar sus veynte e çinco ducados e sesenta maravedis e pidio justicia.

El dicho señor juez dixo que mandava e mando que se notifique al dicho Juanes de Çelayn que le de e entregue al dicho Juan Rodríguez su barra de oro dandole e pagandole lo que sobre ella le deve e sy alguna razon tiene para no hacello que lo diga quel lo oyra e hara justicia testigos Diego Gonzalez escribano publico y Juan de Ascarça.



Appendix E

General Archive of the Indies, Seville, Section Justicia 706, N.4. Excerpt of the proof presented by the legal representative (of the city) Gabriel de Cabrera, regarding the theft of His Majesty's share of gold that he was bringing from Guatemala. Cádiz, [February] 1532, image 141.

Testimony of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo in which he swears that he is a native of Palma de Micer Gilio and testifies that he knows the legal representative of the city of Santiago Gabriel de Cabrera, and the members of the crew of the ship the *San Juan*, Blas Gallego and Pedro Ochoa. On board the ship the *San Juan*, Gabriel de Cabrera transported two crates containing His Majesty's gold as well as documents, letters and other official papers.

Original in Spanish below.

Archivo General de Indias, Justicia 706, N.4. Probanza hecha por parte del procurador Gabriel de Cabrera, sobre el oro que traía a Su Magestad desde Guatemala y que fue robado. Testimonio de Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, natural de Palma de Micer Gilio, quien vino de la provincia de Guatemala. Cádiz, 1532, img. 141

Relaçion de la probança hecha por parte de Gabriel de Cabrera sobre el oro que traya a Su Magestad de Guatimala *ad perpetuan rey memorian*

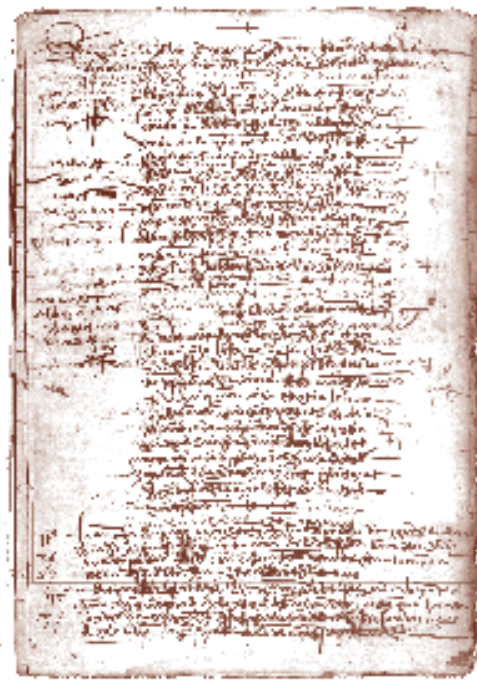
Lo primero se an preguntados si conçoçen al dicho Gabriel de Cabrera e si conçen a Blas Gallego maestre y señor de la nao nonbrada *San Juan* que esta surta en la baya de esta çibdad y a Pero Ochoa su contramaestre y si an notiçia de la dicha nao y si ovieron notiçia de dos caxones que truxo con oro de Su Magestad el dicho Gabriel de Cabrera de la provinçia de Guatimala que es en la Tierra Firme del Mar Oçeano al puerto de San Juan de [U]lua que es en la Nueva España.

Que si conosçen y tienen notiçia.

Yten si saben que la çibdad de Santiago el conçejo justiçia e regidores della y de çiertas villas que estan pobladas de xpyanos vasallos de Su Magestad en la gobernaçion de la dicha Guatimala envyaron e an enbyado al dicho Gabriel de Cabrera como mensaje y enbaxada a sus Magestades con çiertas cartas y escrituras para hazer saber a Sus Magestades çiertas cosas conplideras a su serviçio y al bien de las dichas partes.

Primer testigo.

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo natural de Palma de Miçergillo que la sabe la dicha pregunta como en ella se contiene por que lo vio asi pasar e este testigo propio vino de Guatimala de la dicha provinçia y esto es verdad.
(...)



Appendix F

Historical Provincial Archive of Seville, Section Protocolos Notariales. Signatura: 6685-P.* Juan Rodríguez grants a power of attorney to Alonso Sánchez de Ortega. Dated in Seville, March 13, 1532 [2 folios].

Juan Rodríguez appoints a power of attorney, granting complete authority to Alonso Sánchez de Ortega (his future father-in-law), in Seville. Juan Rodríguez grants authority to Alonso Sánchez de Ortega so that he may claim at the House of Trade of the Indies, a gold bar which the grantor gave in deposit to a crew member of the *San Juan*: a ship which is the property of the master Blas Gallego. In this notarial document, Juan Rodríguez declares that he is a merchant and a citizen of the city of Santiago de Guatemala.

Original in Spanish below.

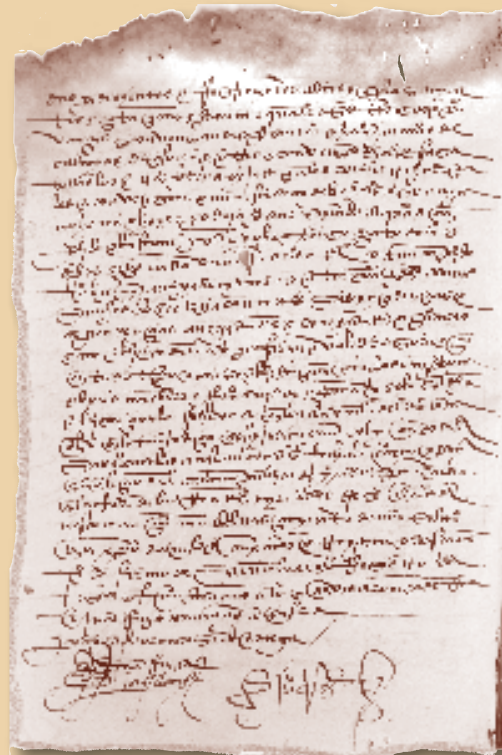
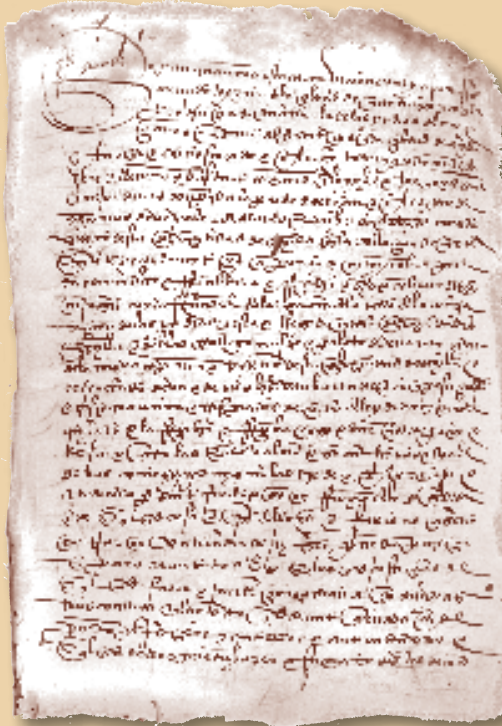
Archivo Histórico Provincial de Sevilla, Sección Protocolos Notariales. Signatura: 6685-P.* Poder de Juan Rodríguez, mercader y vecino de Guatemala a Alonso Sánchez de Ortega [su futuro suegro]. Sevilla, 13 de marzo, 1532.

Poder. Sepan quantos esta carta vieren como yo Juan Rodríguez mercader vezino de la çibdad de Santiago ques en la provinçia de Guatemala de las Indias del Mar Oçeano estante al presente en esta çibdad de Sevilla otorgo e conosco que doy e otorgo todo mi poder cumplido libre e llenero e bastante segund que lo yo he e tengo e segund que mejor e más complida lo puedo e devo dar e otorgar de derecho más deve valer a Alonso Sánchez de Ortega mercader vecino desta dicha çibdad de Sevilla en la collaçion de Santa Maria. Especialmente para que por mí e en mi nombre pueda demandar e recabdar e rescibir e aver e cobrar asy en juizio como fuera dél de los señores de la Casa de la Contraçion de las Indias que está e resyde en esta dicha çibdad de Sevilla o de Blas Gallego maestre e piloto de una nao que vino de la Nueva España e vecino desta dicha çibdad de Sevilla e de quien con derecho deva e de sus bienes una barra de oro que pesa çinquenta e tres e quarenta e tres pesos de oro de ley de diez e nueve quilates e la rescibir e

resçiba en sy e dar cartas de pago e de fin e quito las quales valan e sean firmes e valederas como sy yo mismo las diese e otorgase e a todo ello presente fuese. E sy en razon de lo que dicho es o de qualquier cosa o parte dello es o fuere neçesario entrar en contienda de juisio pueda paresçer e paresca ante todos e qualesquier justiçias de qualquier fuero e juridiçion que sean asy eclesyasticos como seglares doquier e ante quien esta carta de poder paresçiere e ante ellos e ante cada uno e qualquier dellos pueda hazer e faga todas las demandas // pedimentos e requerimientos abtos y enplazamientos e çitaçiones e presentar qualesquier testigos e provanças que convengan de se presentar e haser juramentos de calunnia e deçisorio e otros que convengan e haser e faga todos los otros abtos asy judiçiales como estrajudiçiales que convengan e menester sean de se haser e que yo mismo haria e hazer podria presente seyendo e quand conplido e bastante poder yo he e tengo para todo lo que dicho es. E para cada una cosa dello tal e tan conplido e bastante y ese mismo do e otorgo al dicho Alonso Sánchez de Ortega con todas sus ynçidencias e dependencias anexidades e conexidades e prometo e me obligo de lo aver por firme e valedero agora e para en todo tiempo que sea so obligaçion que fago de mi persona e bienes muebles e raices avidos e por aver so la qual dicha obligaçion lo relieve de aquella clausula del derecho que es dicha en latin judiçion systy judicatum solvi con todas sus clausulas acostunbradas. Fecha la carta en Sevilla en el ofiçio del escrivano público de yuso escripto que es en la calle de las Gradas miercoles treze dias del mes de março año del nascimiento de nuestro salvador Ihesu Xristo de mill e quinientos e treynta e dos años e lo firmó de su nombre en el registro testigos que fueron presentes a lo que dicho es Alonso de Rua e Juan Ruis escrivanos de Sevilla.

Poder que do Alonso Sánchez de Ortega.

[Firmado y rubricado: Juan Ruis escrivano de Sevilla. Juan Rodríguez]



Appendix G

General Archive of the Indies, Seville, Section Justicia 707, N.6. Alonso Sánchez de Ortega, merchant from Seville, presents the record of the gold registered by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo on the ship the *San Juan*. Dated in Seville, March 22, 1532, image 30.

Alonso Sánchez de Ortega on behalf of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo (his future son-in-law) presents the record of the gold registered by him when he boarded the ship the *San Juan* and which he brought from Veracruz. Juan Rodríguez swore that he carried on his person and at his own risk 1,500 pesos of *oro de minas* (gold from mines). The record of the registration of his gold is part of the paperwork asked for in the transaction to successfully recuperate a small gold bar that is being held in the House of Trade of the Indies in Seville.

Original in Spanish below.

Archivo General de Indias, Justicia 707, N.6. Alonso Sánchez de Ortega, mercader de Sevilla tiene un poder notarial de su futuro yerno, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo. Él presenta el registro del oro que Cabrillo trajo en la nao *San Juan* desde Veracruz. Llevaba 1.500 pesos de oro de minas. Sevilla, 22 de marzo, 1532, img. 30.

Registro Juan Rodríguez que lleva en su poder suyos mill e quinientos pesos de oro de minas los quales van a su riesgo e firmolo Juan Rodrigues.

ID pesos

En la margen de la dicha partida esta escrito lo syguiente Llevolos Juan Rodriguez. En testimonio de lo qual de pedimiento de Alonso Sanchez de Ortega en nombre del dicho Juan Rodríguez di la presente e firmada de my nonbre que es fecha dentro en la Casa de la Contratacion de las Yndias en veynte e dos dias del mes de março de mill e quinientos e treynta e dos años esta testado do diz el dicho. Juan de Huguivar escribano de sus Magestades.

Presentada la dicha fe luego los dichos señores juezes la mandaron poner en el proceso e que lo vea el letrado de la Casa.

E despues desto en miercoles veynte e siete dias del dicho mes de março e del dicho año de mill e quinientos e treynta e dos anos los dichos señores juezes mandaron dar al dicho Alonso Sanchez en el dicho nonbre el dicho oro que pide depositando primeramente ante ellos los maravedis que confiesa que debe sobre el dicho oro Juan Lopez de Recalde,

Juan de Aranda, el liçenciado Gonzalo Fernandes. Dieron e pronunscieraon este mando los señores juezes el contador Juan Lopez de Recalde e el fator Juan de Aranda (...)



Appendix H

General Archive of the Indies, Seville, Section Audiencia of Guatemala 393, L.1. Royal decree from the Queen that states that Juan Rodríguez de Palma left Spain in the armada to Tierra Firme, under Pedrarias Dávila and also that she is granting him a reduction in the customs tax. Dated in Medina del Campo, May 24, 1532, image 41.

The Queen of Spain grants privileges to Juan Rodríguez de Palma, a citizen of the city of Santiago de Guatemala, by Royal decree dated May 24, 1532. This document has two distinct parts. A first text recognizes the expeditionary trajectory of Juan Rodríguez de Palma who embarked in the armada of Pedrarias Dávila for the conquest of the New World and then served in Cuba and in the discovery and conquest of New Spain (Mexico) and then decided to reside in the province of Guatemala. It is also stated that Rodríguez de Palma has just married and that he plans to take his wife to the city of Santiago. The Queen also grants him another favor, and that is the reduction of taxes that one is obliged to pay for the transport of goods from Spain to the New World: this customs tax is known as the *almojarifazgo*.

Original in Spanish below.

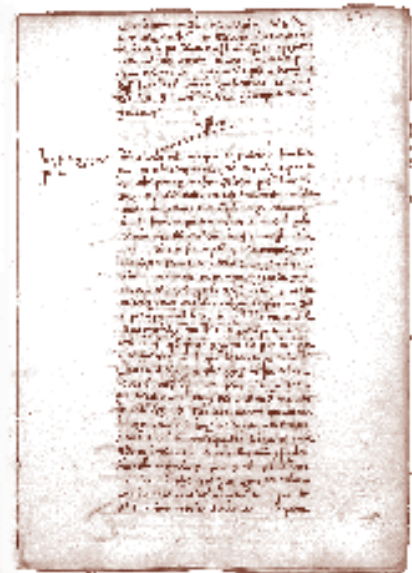
Archivo General de Indias, Guatemala 393, L.1. Real cédula de la Reina donde se lee que Juan Rodríguez de Palma, vecino

de Guatemala, partió de España 18 años atrás en la armada de Pedrarias Dávila a Tierra Firme y luego sirvió en Cuba, Nueva España y en Guatemala. Medina del Campo, 24 de mayo, 1532, img. 41.

La Reyna

Joan Rodriguez de Palma [en el margen]

Nuestros ofiçiales de la provincia de Guatemala Juan Rodriguez de Palma vezino de la çibdad de Santiago que es en esa dicha provincia me hizo relacion que el a mas de diez e ocho años que paso a esas partes en el armada de Pedrarias de Avila nuestro governador de Tierra Firme y que despues nos sirvio en la Ysla de Cuba y se allo en el descubrimiento e conquista de la Nueva España y fue a poblar a essa provincia y por que agora se a casado y lleba su muger a esa tierra con proposito de permanecer en ella y por que para el proybimiento de su persona e casa tiene neçesidad de llebar algunas cosas me suplico e pedio por merçed le yziese merçed de los derechos del almojarifadgo que dello nos pedia pertenesçer o como la mi merçed E yo tovelo por bien por ende yo vos mando que de todo lo que llebare e pasare el dicho Joan Rodriguez de que debiere el dicho almojarifadgo hasta en cantidad de trezientos pesos de valor no le pidays derechos de almojarifadgo por quanto yo le hago merçed dellos por manera que monta la merçed que asi le hazemos veynte e doss pesos e medio con tanto que lo que asi llebare mi parte dello no bendan e mandamos a los nuestros ofiçiales de la Ysla Española San Joan e Cuba e Tierra Firme que aunque el dicho Juan Rodriguez desembarcare las dichas cosas no las bendiendo ni parte de ellas e tornandolas a enbarcar no le pidan (...)

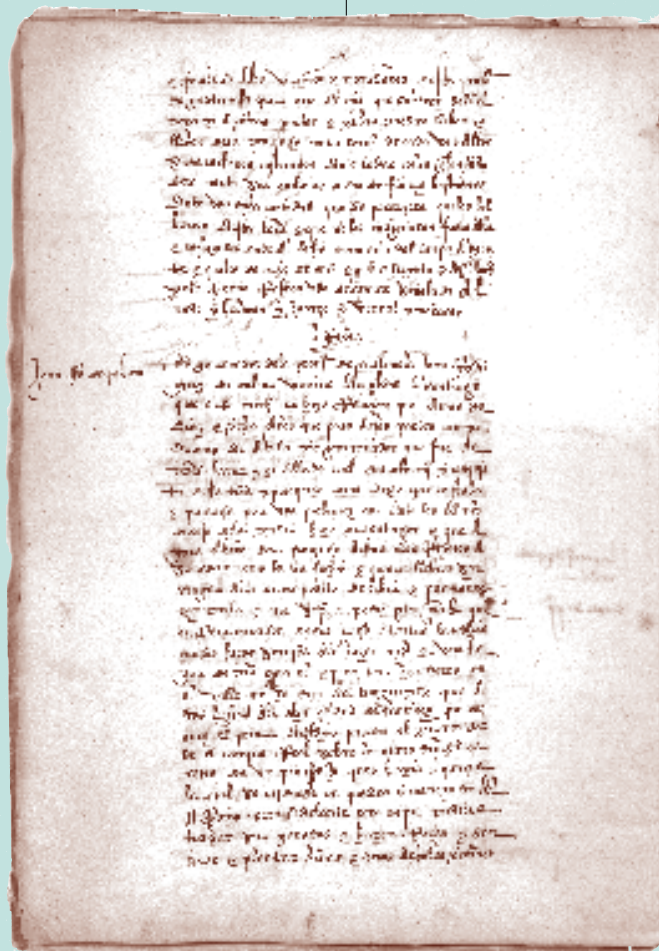


Appendix I

General Archive of the Indies, Seville, Section Audiencia of Guatemala 393, L.1. Royal decree from the Queen regarding the grant of a league of land in the Tianguecillo Valley in Guatemala to Juan Rodríguez de Palma.

Dated in Medina del Campo, May 24, 1532, image 38 [transcription 38-39].

Juan Rodríguez de Palma, a citizen of the city of Santiago de Guatemala, asked the Crown for the privilege of a league of land for himself and his heirs in the Tianguecillo Valley. The Queen issues a Royal decree in which it is stated that Juan Rodríguez de Palma left Spain in the armada of Pedrarias Dávila [1514] and that now he has married (in Seville) and he has asked for a league of land in the Tianguecillo valley. The document gives information on the location and quality of the land and its proposed usage for agricultural pursuits and raising livestock.



Original in Spanish below.

Archivo General de Indias, Guatemala 393, L.1. Real cédula de la Reyna donde se lee que Juan Rodríguez de Palma, vecino de Guatemala, partió de España 18 años atrás en la armada de Pedrarias Dávila y que ahora se ha casado y pide una legua de tierra en el valle del Tianguecillo. Medina del Campo, 24 de mayo, 1532, imgs. 38-39.

Joan Rodriguez de Palma [en el margen]

Nuestro governador de la provincia de Guatemala Juan Rodriguez de Palma vezino de la cibdad de Santiago que es en esa provincia me hizo relacion que a mas de diez e ocho años que paso a esas partes con Pedrarias de Avila nuestro governador que fue de Tierra Firme y se allado en el descubrimiento y conquista dessa tierra y provincia como dixo que costaba y parescia por una

probança que ante los del Nuestro Consejo de Las Yndias hizo presentacion. E que agora el bino desa provincia a estos nuestros Reynos a se casar como lo ha fecho y quiere llebar su muger alla con proposito de bibir e permanseçer

en ella e me suplico e pedio por merced que en renumeracion de sus servicios atentas las dichas causas fuese servida de le hazer merced de una legua de tierra para el e para sus herederos en el valle que se dize del Tianguecillo que es a dos leguas de la dicha cibdad de Santiago, que comiençe del primer arroyo pasado el puerto desde el camino Real sobre la mano derecha camino de un pinarejo? que es hazia el quinze la qual se midiese en quadra comenzando del arroyo para adelante para en que pudiese traher sus ganados e hazer Roças y senbrar e plantar biñas e otros arboles o como [img. 39] la mi merced fuese.

Por ende yo vos mando que luego veays lo suso dho y sin perjuyzio de nuestra Corona Real ni de otro tercero alguno senaleys al dicho Joan Rodriguez en la dha legua de tierra que asi pide la cantidad que os paresciere que se le deve dar que

siendo por vos senalado, yo por la presente le ago merced de la dicha tierra que asi le senalardes para que lo aya y goze y libre y se aproveche dello el yuso herederos y subcesores para agora e para sienpre jamas con tanto aquellos o al uno dellos no lo puedan bender ni henajerar ni bendan ni enajen durante el termino de seys años primeros siguientes contados del dia que se los senalardes y conque en la dicha tierra que asi labrare y roçaren y sembraren despues de cogido el fruto della sea pasto comun entre todos los vezinos e moradores a la dicha tierra comarcanos. E no fagades ende al fecha en Medina del Campo a veynte e quatro dias del mes de mayo de mill e quinientos e treynta e dos años.

Yo la Reyna, refrendada de Samano señalada del Conde y Beltran y Juarez y Vernal y Mercado

La Reyna

Appendix J

Historical Provincial Archive of Seville, Section Protocolos Notariales. Signatura: 42-P.* Juan Rodríguez, merchant and citizen of the city of Santiago, grants a signed power of attorney to Antonio de Luisi. Dated in Seville, August 5, 1532 [2 folios].

Juan Rodríguez, merchant and citizen of the city of Santiago in the province of Guatemala grants a power of attorney to a merchant from Perugia [Italy], Antonio de Luisi and names him as his legal representative. With this authorized and signed letter Luisi can represent Rodríguez in matters pending in Spain such as the transfer of Rodríguez's Black slaves and his silverware to New Spain (Mexico).

Original in Spanish below.

Archivo Histórico Provincial de Sevilla, Sección Protocolos Notariales. Signatura: 42-P.* Juan Rodríguez, mercader y vecino de la ciudad de Santiago en la provincia de Guatemala, otorga poder a Antonio de Luisi, mercader perusino, para que en su nombre pueda llevar o enviar a la Nueva España los esclavos y plata labrada, etc. de que Su Majestad le ha hecho merced. Lleva su firma. Sevilla, 5 de agosto, 1532.

Sean quantos esta carta vieren como yo Juan Rodriguez mercader vezino de la çibdad de Santiago de la provinçia de Guatimala que es en la Nueva España de las Yndias del Mar Oçeano otorgo e conosco que do todo my poder cumplido e bastante segund que lo yo he e tengo e segun que de derecho mas deve valer a Antonio de Luisi mercader perusyno estante en esta dicha çibdad, espeçialmente para que por my e en my nonbre pueda demandar e recabdar e resçibir e aver e cobrar asy en juicio como fuera del de todas e qualesquier persona o personas que con derecho deva e de sus bienes todos e qualesquier maravedis e oro e plata e perlas e esclavos e otras cosas qualesquier que me deven e devieren de aqui adelante o que yo o otro por my cobrare a esta dicha çibdad de las dichas Yndias e de otras qualesquier partes e lugares.

E de lo que resçibiere e cobrare pueda dar e otorgar carta o cartas de pago de resçibimiento e de

finequitamiento las que en la dicha razon cunplieren e menester fueren las quales e cada una dellas valan e sean tan firmes e bastantes como sy yo mysymo las diese e otorgase e a todo ello presente fuese. E para que pueda enbiar e pasar a la dicha Nueva España de las Yndias del Mar Oçeano todos los esclavos e plata labrada de que su magestad me hizo merçed por dos provisyones e para

que en razon de lo que dicho es e de cada cosa dello pueda paresçer e paresca ante todos e qualesquier alcaldes e juezes e justiçias de qualquier fuero e juridicion que sean e hazer todas las demandas pedimentos e requerimientos afrentas e protestaciones e juramentos e enbargos e execuciones e prisiones e ventas e remates de bienes e todos los otros abtos e diligencias que convengan e menester sean de se hazer e yo mysymo haria e hazer podria presente seyendo e quand cumplido e bastante poder yo he e tengo para lo que dicho es tal e tan cumplido e bastante.

E ese mysymo lo otorgo e doy al dicho Antonio de Luisi con todas sus ynçidencias e dependencias anexidades e conexidades e con facultad de hazer e sostituyr en su lugar e en my nonbre [fol.1v] un procurador o dos o más quales e quantos quysiere e los re[vo]car] cada que quysiere e tornar e tomar el poder prinçipal en sy e relievolos de toda carga de satisfadon e fiaduria e de la clabsula del derecho *judicium systi judicatum solvi* con todas sus clausulas acostumbradas e para lo cumplir e aver por firme obligo a my e a todos mys bienes muebles e rayzes avidos e por aver. Fecha la carta en Sevylla en el ofiçio de Alonso de la Barrera escrivano público lunes çinco dias del mes de [tachado: otubre] agosto año del nascimiyento de nuestro salvador Ihu Xpo de myll e quinientos e treynta e dos años testigos que fueron presentes Pedro de Toledo e Pero Gutierres de Padilla escrivanos de Sevilla e el dicho Juan Rodriguez lo firmo de su nonbre en el registro. Poder general para recibir e cobrar e para pasar los esclavos e plata Pedro Gutierres de Padilla escrivano de Sevilla Juan Rodriguez Pedro de Toledo escrivano de Sevilla



Appendix K

General Archive of Central America, Guatemala City, A1.20. Leg.732. Document that certifies the formation of a partnership between Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo and Pedro Hernández Picón to transport nine horses from the Lempa River to Peru. Dated in Santiago (Guatemala), January 9, 1538, folios 180v.-181r.

This signed contract is drafted in the city of Santiago de Guatemala on January 9, 1538 and specifies the clauses of the partnership agreement and the commercial relationship being formed between Pedro Hernández Picón and Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo for the transfer and sale of nine horses from the Lempa River to Peru. The proceeds from the sale of four of the horses is shared between the two partners; however, the proceeds from the sale of the five remaining horses belong solely to Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo. In the same agreement it is stated that certain unnamed goods are being delivered by Andrés de Ulloa (Cabrillo's son-in-law) to the ship in the Port of Lempa to be transported to and marketed in Peru.

Original in Spanish below.

Archivo General de Centro América, A1.20. Leg.732. Compañía de Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo y Pedro Hernández Picón para llevar nueve caballos del rio de Lempa al Perú, 9 de enero, 1538, fols. 180v.-181r.

En el nonbre de Dios amen sepan quantos esta carta de compañía vieren como yo Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo vezino que so desta çibdad de Santiago desta provinçia de Guatemala de una parte e como yo Pedro Fernandez Picón de la otra otorgamos e conoscoçemos que hazemos compañía e somos convenidos e concertados en esta manera.

Que yo el dicho Pedro Fernández Picón tengo de ser obligado e por esta presente carta prometo e me obligo de yr al rio de Lempa a donde vos el dicho Juan Rodriguez tenéis nueve caballos para los embarcar en vuestro navio e llevar al Peru. E dellos tengo de escoger los quatro que mejor me parecieren y así escogidos e señalados los tengo de embarcar e llevar en el dicho vuestro navio a las dichas partes del Peru de compañía por de anbos a dos por quanto yo en esta çibdad os tengo dado e vos de mi aveys recibido en recompensa de los dichos caballos otros dos. E los tengo de beneficiar e curar e despues de llegados al dicho Peru los tengo de vender a los mayores e mejores preçios que yo pudiere aver y allar. E sacados los fletes e costas que en ello se ovieren fecho todo lo demas que restare lo avemos de partir de por medio tanto el uno como el otro. E demas desto tengo de ser obligado e por esta presente carta prometo e me obligo de embarcar en el dicho navio

los demas çinco caballos que quedan que [¿son?] de vos el dicho Juan Rodriguez e yo no tengo parte en ellos e los beneficiar e curar e vender en el dicho Peru a los mayores preçios que yo pudiere aver e hallar. E sacados de su valor quatro çientos e veynte e çinco pesos de oro de minas que vos costaren en esta çibdad e los fletes e gastos que se ovieren fecho de lo que restare de ganancia que Dios en ello diere lo avemos de partir de por medio tanto el uno como el otro. Lo qual tengo de aver por el trabajo que tengo de poner en ello los quales dichos çinco cavallos van a riesgo e ventura de vos el dicho Juan Rodríguez e si alguno o algunos de los dichos caballos muriere que de los que quedaren e se vendieren aveys de sacar los dichos costo e gastos, e lo demas que restare lo avemos de partir de por medio segund dicho es.

Y asimismo tengo de recibir de Andrés de Ulloa çiertas cosas que me entrega en el dicho puerto de Lempa lo qual tengo de llevar con todo lo demas al dicho Peru e vendello e sacado los gastos e costas que oviere fecho e costado lo demas que se oviere de ganancia lo avemos de partir [fol.181r] de por medio. De todo lo qual que dicho es terne quenta e razon de la venta e gastos que se ovieren fecho la qual vos daré con pago çierto e leal e verdadera sin fruto dél e sin engaño cada e quando que por vos me fuere pedida e demandada e con juramento de manera que no vos [¿falta?] cosa alguna de todo ello segund e de la manera que dicho es. E prometo e me obligo de yr a recibir todo lo susodicho luego cada e quando que por vos me fuere dicho e de no dejar de conplir todo lo susodicho e dello vos dar çedula de lo que recibierdes del dicho Ulloa e de lo demas que dicho es para que por virtud dello vos dé quenta e razon. So pena que si no lo conpliere e no fuere de vos pagar todos los daños e menos cabos yntereçes que se os recreçieren e demas que vos no podays dexar de me lo entregar so pena que la parte que contra ello fuere e veniere e no estoviere por ello que dél pague a la parte de nos obiere quinientos pesos de oro por pena y [ilegible] de yntereçe. Lo qual pagado o non hasta que lo en ella contenido vala e sea firme en todo e por todo e yo el dicho Juan Rodríguez que al presente otorgo e conoscoçemos en mí el dicho contrato de suso contenido e lo en el dicho e de suso contenido. E prometo de lo así conplir segund dicho es so las penas de suso contenidos e prometo de no ir contra ello so la pena de suso contenida e de no dexaros de entregar lo susodicho so pena de vos pagar todos los yntereçes que dello vos podría venir. E anbas partes por mejor tenerlo e guardarlo e conplirlo damos poder conplido a todos e qualesquier alcaldes e juezes e justicias de su magestad de qualesquier fuero e jurediçion que sean para que por todos los remedios e rigores del derecho nos costringan a lo así tener e guardar e conplir bien e conplidamente como si así fuese juzgado e sentenciado de juez competente por nos pedido e consentida e pasada en cosa juzgada. E renunciamos toda

qualquier ley de fueros e derechos que en mi favor sean e ser puedan e la ley e regla del derecho en que diz que general renunçiaçion fecha del [¿ley?] no vala e para lo así thener e guardar e conplir como dicho es. Obligamos nuestras personas e byenes muebles e raizes avidos e por aver en testimonio de lo qual otorgamos lo que dicho es ante el escribano público e testigos de yuso escritos que es fecha en la dicha çibdad de Santiago a nueve dias del mes de henero año del naçimiento de nuestro salvador Jesu Cristo de mill e quinientos e treynta e ocho años testigos que fueron presentes a lo que dicho es el señor alcalde Alonso de Reguera e Luis Pérez escribano de su magestad e Juan Marques vecino e estante en esta dicha çibdad e los dichos Juan Rodríguez e Pedro Fernandez lo firmaron de sus nonbres.

Compañía
[Firmado y rubricado: Juan Rodríguez.
Pedro Hernández]



Appendix L

General Archive of Central America, Guatemala City, A1.20. Leg.732. Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo signs a contract granting authority to Juan Cansino to be the master of his ship the *San Juan*. Dated in Santiago, January 17, 1538, folios 168r.-169r.

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, using his full name in the body of the contract and signing at the end as simply "Juan Rodríguez," grants legal authority whereby Juan Cansino can function as the master of his ship for as long as necessary to carry out mercantile activities in accordance with the laws that govern such a transaction. As ship master, he can hire crew and select merchandise to trade; as well he is in charge of associated payments for the crew members. The *San Juan* is docked in the Port of Iztapa and the contract is witnessed by Gonzalo López and Juan Marquez.

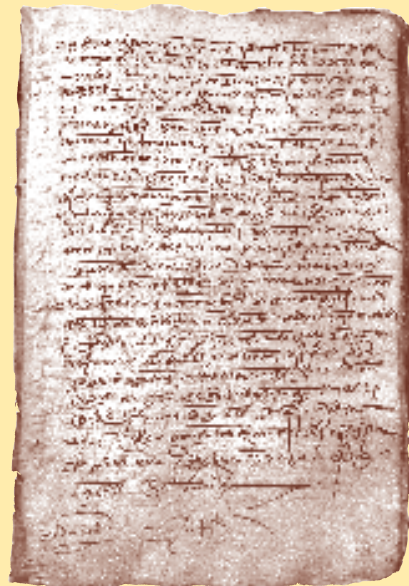
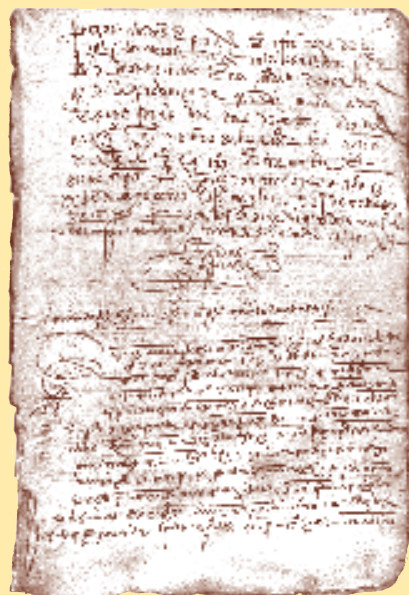
Original in Spanish below.

Archivo General de Centro América, A1.20. Leg.732. Poder que dio Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo a Juan Cansino para que fuera maestre del navio San Juan, 17 de enero, 1538, fols. 168r.-169r.

Sean quantos esta carta vieren como yo Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo vecino que so desta çibdad de Santiago desta probinçia de Guatemala señor que soy del navio nombrado San Juan que al presente está surto en el puerto de Ystapa [Iztapa] desta dicha çibdad otorgo e conosco que do e otorgo mi poder conplido libre e llenero e bastante segund que lo yo e he tengo e de derecho nos puede e deve valer a vos Juan Cansino estante en esta dicha çibdad que soys presente para que por mí e en mi nombre e como yo mismo podays ser e seays maestre del dicho navio e recibirlo e tomarlo a vuestro cargo e los aparejos dél. E como tal maestre regirlo e administrarlo e haser todas las cosas al dicho ofiço anexas e perteneçientes e es obligado a haser. E para que podays fletar e fletes el dicho navio para las partes e lugares [fol.168v] que a vos pareçiere e bien visto fuere e para que lleve la carga que quisierdes e por el preçio de pesos de oro que a vos pareçiere. Y sobre ello podays en mi nombre otorgar e otorgueys qualesquier cartas de fletamiento e fletamientos con las fuerças e vinculos e fyrmezas que pedidas vos fueren para que pagaren los tales fletes a los tiempos e plazos que vos con ellos vos conçertades e quisierdes. Las quales vos otorgo e do yo por esta presente carta otorgo e prometo e me obligo de las tener e guardar e conplir segund e de la manera que vos las otorgardes e reçibir e reçibays en vos los pesos de oro que se montaren los tales fletes e dello podays e deys vuestra carta o cartas de pago e de reçibimiento e de finequito. E valan e sean firmes como sy yo las diese e otorgase

presente siendo. E otrosi vos doy este dicho poder para que sy fuere neçesario podays dar e deis carena al dicho navio e lo adoveys en las partes e lugares que a vos pareçiere que es menester e gastar e gasteis en el dicho adobio todo aquello que a vos pareçiere que es neçesario de se gastar teniendo dello quenta e razon e de todo lo demas que con el dicho navio se ganare e oviere para lo dar cada e quando que vos la pida. E otrosi vos doy este dicho poder para que podays coger qualesquier marineros que vos pareçieren para el dicho navio por los preçios e de la manera que a vos pareçiere e los despedir e pagar lo que ovieren servido en dicho navio e coger otros de nuevo e les otorgar qualesquier cartas de soldada e conoçimientos que vos pareçiere. Lo qual vos otorgando yo desde agora otorgo de la forma e manera que vos las otorgardes asi en razon de lo que dicho es o de qualquier parte dello fuere neçesario del [ilegible] contenida de juicio podays pedir e parescais ante todos qualesquier alcaldes e juezes e justicias de su magestad de qualquier fuero e juridiçion que sean y ante ellos e ante cada uno dellos demandar e responder e negar e conoçer e pedir e requerir querrela afrontar e protestar e escrivir testimonios. Pedir e tomar e pedir e presentar testigos e probanças escripturas [fol.169] e presentar e jurar e conoçer los testigos e probanças e escripturas que por la otra parte o partes contra mí e el dicho navio fueren dados e presentados. E los tachar e contradrezir asi en dichos como en personas e tachar qualquier juramento e juramentos asi de calunia como deçisorio e jurar en mi anima si acaeçiere. E para concluir [ilegible] razon pedir e oyr sentençia o sentençias asi enterlocutorias como definitivas e las consentir o apelar e suplicar della o dellas para alli e do con derecho devierdes haser e hagades en juicio e fuera. E todos los demas autos e diligençias asi judiciales como estrajudiciales que convengan e menester sean de se haser e yo haria siendo presente e convenga de se haser para el buen regimiento del dicho navio e para que en lo tocante a qualquier pleitos e cobranças podays haser e sustituir un poder o dos o mas e los revocar quando por bien tovierdes quedando en vos este dicho poder que para todo ello vos lo do conplido con sus ynçidençias e dependençias anexidades e conexidades. E vos relievio segun forma de derecho e otorgo de aver por firme lo que dicho es so obligaçion que hago de mi persona e bienes muebles e rayces avidos e por aver en testimonio de lo qual otorgué lo que dicho es ante el escribano de yuso escripto que es fecho en la dicha çibdad de Santiago a diez e siete dias del mes de henero año del nacimiento de nuestro salvador Jesu Cristo de mill e quinientos e treinta e ocho años testigos que fueron presentes a lo que dicho es Gonzalo Lopez e Juan Marquez estantes en esta dicha çibdad e el dicho Juan Rodríguez lo firmó aqui de su nombre.

Poder de maestre. [Firmado y rubricado: Juan Rodríguez]



Appendix M

General Archive of Central America, Guatemala City, A1.20. Leg.732. Juan Rodríguez charters his ship the *San Salvador* to Juan Gómez Camacho, for voyages to Peru [January 1538], folio 181v.

This appears to be the first written mention of the *San Salvador*. Only the first folio of the document has survived but nevertheless, the document contains important details regarding the chartering of this ship. Rodríguez, owner of the ship docked in the Port of Iztapa, and citizen of Santiago in the province of Guatemala, hereby charters his ship to Gómez. Gómez is transporting to Peru four horses with their saddles and gear with a Spaniard and a Black man (un negro) to care for the horses. The owner will provide the ship in good condition with supplies and firewood, and fresh water for the horses and the men in charge of caring for them. He will provide these items either in the Lempa River or in the Port of Fonseca and the voyage will be to the Port of Tumbes, Peru.

Original in Spanish below.

Archivo General de Centro América, A1.20. Leg.732. Fletamiento del navío *San Salvador* a Juan Gómez Camacho, para viajes al Perú [1538], fol. 181v.

Sean quantos esta carta vieren como yo Juan Rodriguez señor que soy del navio nonbrado San Salvador que al presente está surto en el puerto de Ystapa desta Mar del Sur vezino que soy desta çibdad de Santiago desta provincia de Guatemala otorgo e conosco que fletó a vos Juan Gomez Camacho que estays presente en el dicho navio cargado para que lleveys e paseys a las partes del Peru quatro caballos con un español e un negro que los curen e quatro sillas e quatro [ilegible] e quatro dozenas de herraje e prometo e me obligo de vos dar el dicho navio para que llebe lo susodicho estanco de quilla e costado e bien aparejado y amarinado con todos los aparejos que dentro del dicho navio estan e fuera sirben e marineros que menester ovieren y toda el agua dulce que fuere menester para los dichos cavallos e español e negro que los an de curar e leña e fuego para lo que menester ovierdes todo lo qual prometo e me obligo de tomar y embarcar en el dicho navio en el rio de Lempa o Puerto de Fonseca donde más aparejo para ello oviere e los llevar a desembarcar a la parte del Peru en el puerto de Tumbes a donde thengo de haser la dicha descarga de los caballos que en el dicho navio llevare llevandonos Dios en salvamento. E me obligo de tratar bien e guardar lo que me fuere posible los dichos cavallos e personas e bastimentos e otras cosas que metierdes para los dichos cavallos e el español e negro que los an de curar. Lo qual vos soys obligado a meter en el dicho navio e prometo e me obligo de dar el dicho navio tal e tan bueno segun de cómo es costumbre desta Mar del Sur y es así que si alguno de los dichos cavallos despues

de embarcados hasta que se desembarquen en el dicho puerto de Tumbes con veynte e quatro horas adelante se muriere no seays obligado a pagar el flete del tal cavallo que muriere. E yo el dicho Juan Gomez Camacho que presente so a todo lo que dicho es otorgo e conosco e prometo que fletó con vos el dicho Juan Rodriguez señor del dicho navio los dichos quatro caballos e el español e negro con lo que //²



Appendix N

General Archive of Central America, Guatemala City, A1.2.4. Leg.2195, Exp.15749. Royal decree from His Majesty in which he nullify's the land grant in the Panchoy Valley given to Juan Rodríguez de Palma. Dated in Guadalajara (Spain), October 11, 1546, folio 342.

Royal decree addressed to the President and Judges of the the Royal Court of Justice of the Confines which is in the city of Santiago de Guatemala. In consideration of an earlier Royal decree which was given by the Empress and Queen on May 24, 1532, regarding concession of lands in the Tianguecillo Valley in favor of Juan Rodríguez de Palma, it has come to the Crown's attention that against the tenor of that decree the land grant was given elsewhere, in an area now earmarked for the construction of the new city of Santiago de Guatemala. The family must relinquish this land and take instead the land that they were originally granted in the Tianguecillo Valley. Signed by the King, October 11, 1546.

Original in Spanish below.

Archivo General de Centro América, A1.2.4. Leg.2195, Exp.15749. Real Cédula. Su Majestad declara nulo el reparto de tierras en el valle de Panchoy hecho en la persona

² Juan José Falla noted that the last line of this document is missing and thus the place and date of its elaboration are not known. See Falla, *Extractos de Escrituras Públicas*, III, p. 187. This document is in the protocol book of the scribe Luis Pérez, which contains documents dated in 1538.

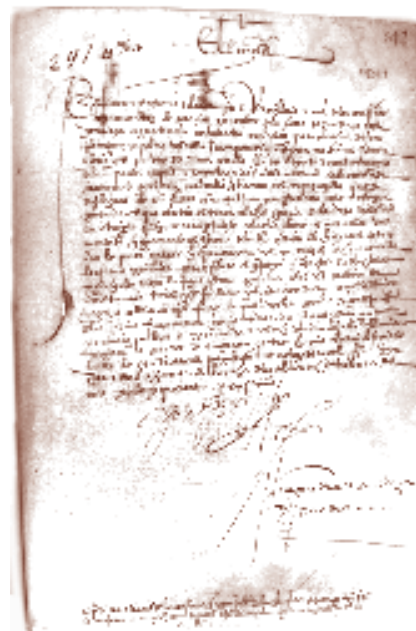
de Juan Rodríguez de Palma, porque es en perjuicio del sitio de la nueva ciudad. Vuelve a emitir la real cédula fechada el 24 de mayo, 1532 dándole tierras en el valle del Tianguecillo. 11 de octubre, 1546, fol. 342. + [Cruz]

El Príncipe

Presidente e oydores de la Audiencia e Chancillería Real de los Confines Herman Méndez de Sotomayor en nombre de la çibdad de Santiago de esa provincia de Guatemala me ha hecho relación que a suplicación de Juan Rodríguez de Palma vezino della la Emperatriz Reyna mi señora que santa gloria aya por una su real çédula fecha en veynte e quatro de mayo del año pasado de quinientos y treynta y dos avia mandado se le señalase çierta parte de tierra en el valle que llaman del Tianguecillo que es a dos leguas de la dicha çibdad como constava por el traslado della de que hazia presentación. E que contra el tenor de la dicha çédula se le avia señalado en otra parte que diz que es en perjuicio de la dicha çibdad y me suplicó vos mandase que guardando el thenor de la dicha çédula le hiziesedes señalar la parte de tierra que oviese de aver y le quitasedes la que contra ella le estava señalada porque cesase el perjuicio que rescibia la dicha çibdad e para que ella diese la que asy estava señalada a los vecinos de quien se avia tomado tierras para su sitio y fundación della como diz que lo quiere hazer o como la mi merçed fuese. Lo qual visto por los del Consejo Real de las Indias fue acordado que devia mandar dar esta mi çédula para vos e yo tovelo por bien porque vos mando que veais lo susodicho y llamados e oydas las partes a quien toca y atañe hagais e administreis sobre ello lo que hallardes por justicia e no fagades ende al fecha en Guadalajara a honze dias del mes de octubre de mill y quinientos y quarenta y seys años.

[Firmado y rubricado: Yo el Rey

Por mandado de su alteza Joan de Samano]



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Editor

Modern-day Palma del Río, Spain



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