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Cashiering the Last Conquistador: The *Juicio de Residencia* of Don Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera, 1635-1644

WILLIAM J. MCCARTHY

As one of the most autonomous officials of the Spanish empire, the governor and captain general of the Philippines represented various aspects of Spanish colonial administration, including the potential for unchecked behavior at locations far from the metropole, the ability to profit personally from office, and the embodiment of the adage "obedezco pero no cumplo." Arguably, Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera (1635-1644) was the most headstrong governor of the entire colonial period, known both as "son of the devil" and "the last Conquistador," as well as having been praised for his administrative acumen.¹ His colorful tenure demonstrates the rampant initiative available to individuals in this position. Moreover, his intransigent behavior reveals his audacity and ambition, while his corruption and acquisitiveness expose the very limits of graft and corruption. In the instance of Hurtado de Corcuera, he also had the potential of utilizing the *juicio de residencia* to call audacious officials to account.

The governor general's career in the Philippines is examined primarily through his *residencia* materials, which support the notion that Hurtado de Corcuera operated in his own favor during his tenure and added to his own considerable wealth. The list of charges and collection of depositions provide a glimpse into a particularly rancorous trial and, quite possibly, one of the lengthiest list of transgressions committed in a colony notorious for excess. As a frontier outpost, the Philippines was considered by many as representative of a culture of corruption, or a "fetid climate,"² where a series of extremes often impacted people's lives—heat, opportunity, power, and corruption.

Subordinate to the viceroy of New Spain, the governor's authority in Manila was circumscribed further by the Audiencia de

¹ Onofre D. Corpuz, *The Bureaucracy in the Philippines* (Manila: University of the Philippines, Institute of Public Administration, 1957), 128.

² Xavier Huetz de Lemp, *L'Archipel des Épices: la corruption de l'Administration Espagnole aux Philippines, fin xviiiè-fin xixè siècle* (Madrid: Casa de Velásquez, 2006), 264-70.

Manila, the Junta de Repartimientos, the archbishop of Manila, and, on occasion, by the viceroy of the Estado da India. Despite these competing interests, he acted independently without very much interference.³ According to Robert Reed, "the governor-general of the Philippines possessed such broad authority and remained so geographically isolated from metropolitan officials that many scholars have likened him to an independent monarch."⁴

Spanish colonial administration throughout the empire has been characterized as striving for a balance between authority and flexibility.⁵ The Philippines represented the extreme version of this tendency, and the equilibrium often reached in other places was less likely to materialize there. Due to the colony's location in Asia, ideas of authority, commerce, slavery, and service often differed from those in America.⁶ Its distance far from Spain also created an atmosphere of "looseness" that did not adhere precisely to the Latin American model. In fact, Peter Borschberg warns against analyzing the colonial Philippines too closely within the context of Latin American history, and suggests that important factors strongly differentiate the two: first, the nature of Asian commerce and, second, the prominent goal of the Spanish in the Philippine colony during the first decades to convert and subdue China.⁷ Additionally, the Philippine climate did not compare favorably to that of Mexico and, as a result, agriculture remained of

³ The Audiencia Real was established in 1583. The Junta de Repartimiento, established in 1604, was charged with the responsibility of ensuring equitable distribution of lading space on the Acapulco-bound galleons. The Portuguese viceroy occasionally held the upper hand administratively, for instance, with regard to the attempted creation of joint naval exercises.

⁴ Robert Ronald Reed, *Colonial Manila: The Context of Hispanic Urbanism and Process of Morphogenesis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 36.

⁵ Josep M. Delgado Ribas, *Dinámicas imperiales, 1650-1796: España, América y Europa en el cambio institucional del sistema colonial español* (Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, 2007), 22; expanding upon the ideas discussed in John Leddy Phelan, "Authority and Flexibility in the Spanish Imperial Bureaucracy," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 5:1 (1960):47-65.

⁶ William Henry Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth Century Philippine Culture and Society* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994), chaps. 3, 4, and 7; and Anthony Reid, *The Lands Below the Winds*, volume 1 of *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), chaps. 1, 3, and 4.

⁷ Peter Borschberg, ed., *Iberians in the Singapore-Melaka Area and Adjacent Regions (16th to 18th Century)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004), Introduction. While the Asian factors are undoubtedly significant, an administrative analysis is more effective within the framework of the Latin American example.

minimal importance and rendered the Spanish Philippine community utterly dependent upon commerce for economic survival.⁸

Since the foundation of the colony, Philippine governors were charged primarily with engineering the financial success of the colony, with particular attention paid to the seminal commerce in Chinese goods and the defense of Manila. In addition, during the first few decades of occupation, there was a fairly energetic attempt to maintain a presence in the Moluccas, providing a defensive flank for the Spanish American empire, objectives that later were more or less abandoned but that formed an initial impetus for ambitious settlement.⁹ From the time of the appointment of the very first governor-captain general, Miguel López de Legazpi, those holding this office were "empowered to administer...civil and criminal justice." Additionally, Philippine governors were given considerable authority over colonial officials:

Without any delay or hesitation, and without any further requirement or consultation on our [the king's] part...you are empowered to appoint and shall appoint to the offices of governor, captain-general, constables, and other offices annexed and suitable to your government. You may dismiss and remove these subordinates, whenever you desire, or consider it best to do so.¹⁰

Consequently, the Philippine governors gained power continually, a situation noticed both in Madrid and Mexico City. Several alterations were made over the years regarding the powers and succession of governors in an attempt to ascribe additional authority to

⁸ Luis Alonso Álvarez, "La inviabilidad de la hacienda asiática: coacción y mercado en la formación del modelo colonial en las Islas Filipinas, 1565-1595," in *La formación de una colonia: Filipinas*, vol. 1 of *Imperios y naciones en el Pacífico*, ed. María Dolores Elizalde, Josep M. Fradera, and Luis Alonso Álvarez (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2001), 183. See also William J. McCarthy, "A Spectacle of Misfortune: Wreck, Salvage and Loss in the Spanish Pacific," *The Great Circle* 17:2 (1995):95-108.

⁹ Luis Alonso Álvarez, "Formación y desarrollo del proyecto colonial español en las Islas Filipinas, 1565-1762," in *De Tartessos a Manila: siete estudios coloniales y poscoloniales*, ed. Glòria Cano and Ana Delgado (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2008), 155.

¹⁰ "King to Legazpi, Madrid, 14 August 1569," in Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, eds., *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1803: Explorations by Early Navigators, Descriptions of the Islands and Their Peoples, Their History and Records of the Catholic Missions...* (Cleveland: Arthur C. Clarke, 1903-1909), 3:62-66.

the members of the *audiencia* and to give them power during times when the position of governor was vacant. In the latter instance, for example, the Marqués de la Ensenada attempted without success to separate permanently administrative and military powers during the 1750s. Nevertheless, the Crown "gave an amplification of powers to the governor in the interest of achieving *Buen Gobierno*."¹¹ Unique conditions in East Asia, including pressing military needs due to the incursions of other European powers and lamentably slow communication with Madrid, explain the development of this system.

Numerous examples illustrate the power of the governors from the time of the founding of the colony to the tenure of Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera in the late 1630s. From the start, Philippine governors had more power over the awarding of *encomiendas* than did their Spanish American counterparts.¹² Governor Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas (1590-1593) demonstrated his imperiousness by having a soldier executed for striking his lieutenant and disarming the civilian population to minimize disturbances in the streets of Manila.¹³ In 1603, the newly arrived Archbishop Miguel de Benavides called for a visitation when he found that "the governors and other officials are at liberty here to do as they please."¹⁴ Governor Juan de Silva recklessly prepared the 1616 fleet designed to sweep the Dutch from the region, an action that elicited a serious response from other leaders: "The *Audiencia Real*, the Bishop of Manila, leaders of the regular orders and the secular *cabildos* [town councils] could not simply stand aside and do nothing in the face of a tragedy waiting to happen. They sat de Silva down and seriously remonstrated him on the sheer folly of his venture."¹⁵ Philippine governors were often volatile men in difficult

¹¹ Miguel Luque Talaván, "Las instituciones de derecho público y de derecho privado en la Gobernación y Capitanía General de las Islas Filipinas, siglos XVI-XIX," in *Historia general de Filipinas*, ed. Leoncio Cabrero (Madrid: Ediciones de Cultura Hispánica, 2000), 350.

¹² Patricio Hidalgo Nuchera, *Encomienda, tributo y trabajo en Filipinas, 1570-1608* (Madrid: Universidad Autónoma, 1995), 55.

¹³ Horacio de la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines, 1581-1768* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 123.

¹⁴ Nicholas Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1971), 157, quoting "Memorial del Arcobispo electo de Philipinas, 16 diciembre 1603."

¹⁵ Peter Borschberg, "Security, VOC Penetration and Luso-Spanish Co-operation: The Armada of Philippine Governor Juan de Silva in the Straits of Singapore, 1616," in Borschberg, *Iberians in the Singapore-Melaka Area*, 46. The armada sailed but neither rendezvoused with the Portuguese ally, nor engaged the Dutch.

situations and sought to wield as much power as their personalities would permit.

The device of the *juicio de residencia* was developed to help rein in the behavior of Castilian officials, and incoming governors were instructed to pay strict attention to conducting the evaluation of the outgoing governor.¹⁶ Begun during the fifteenth century, with reference to the office of *corregidor* (the royal representative in the towns), the *residencia* was the trial of the outgoing official used to identify any malfeasance before permitting appointment to a subsequent post. The official under investigation remained *in situ* for a specified length of time in order to allow complaints to be lodged against him from any quarter. Charles V applied the procedure to governor-generals in the colonies as he added imperial possessions to his realm.

In the Philippines, the institution long retained its power to check imperious governors. Historian Charles Henry Cunningham stated that the *residencia* was "almost the sole incentive to righteous official conduct" for distant colonial officials.¹⁷ Historian Onofre D. Corpuz offers the observation that "...the proceedings of the [Philippine governor's] *residencia* could be very vexatious, for he was accountable for almost everything that took place during his administration, and he was therefore vulnerable on innumerable counts."¹⁸ Consequently, *residencias* of Philippine governors were often particularly harsh, and numerous governors were imprisoned, exiled, or even removed from office. The seventeenth-century traveler Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri called the *residencia* of the Philippine governor a "dreadful trial," often "breaking the hearts" of the governors. At least three died from the strain: one seventeenth-century governor died while being transported as a prisoner to New Spain; Simón de Anda y Salazar died in 1776 after he was fined 4,000 pesos for having conducted an overly rigorous *residencia* of his

¹⁶ Cushner, *Spain*, 155-56.

¹⁷ Charles Henry Cunningham, *The Audiencia in the Spanish Colonies as Illustrated by the Audiencia of Manila, 1583-1800* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1919), 121.

¹⁸ Corpuz, *The Bureaucracy in the Philippines*, 48.

predecessor;¹⁹ and the Jesuit priest, Pablo Pastells, attributed the death of Don Gonzalo Ronquillo to the rigors of his 1583 *residencia*.²⁰

The religious establishment also resented the authority of the governor. The regular orders depended upon the governor almost alone for largesse, much more so than their counterparts in the New World colonies. Philippine governors retained the right to appoint parish priests, as well as appointing certain orders to certain mission regions. Those benefices in and around Manila were the most attractive, and the bulk of them went to Augustinians.²¹ In the Philippines, the subsidy, or *socorro*, from the Mexican treasury was designed only for expenditures associated with military defense. There was virtually no income for Spaniards. The Crown only paid for their transport to the colony. Thus, the priests had to rely exclusively upon their tributaries in the parishes for sustenance and on grants from the Crown for the construction of residences, schools, and other obligations. Governor Hurtado de Corcuera, for example, accorded the privilege of manufacturing and selling of playing cards to the Jesuits due to the general lack of opportunity to generate income in the colony.

The authority of the Catholic Church in the Philippines frequently and successfully challenged and rivaled that of the governors for a variety of reasons. First, Church officials enjoyed a comparatively long tenure compared to governors and other officials who came and went. Second, with such frequent trouble between governors and *oidores* (judges/legislators), often Church officials stepped in to negotiate conflict. Third, the familiarity of the clergy with local customs and languages gave them an advantage. Fourth, they also had a free hand in complaining directly to the king or to officials of their order back in Spain about the secular officials. The latter resulted in the proliferation of *informes*, which constitute a running chronicle of complaints against Philippine governors.²²

¹⁹ Anda y Salazar also was convicted of allowing officers of the hacienda to leave the islands without permission. According to Cunningham, "These and other charges proved against him [Anda y Salazar] were said to have caused his pre-mature death in 1776." Cunningham, *The Audiencia*, 136, 139. Also see Cushner, *Spain*, chap. 7.

²⁰ Francisco Colín, S.J., *Labor evangélica, ministerios apostólicos de los obreros de la Compañía de Jesús, fundación, y progresos [sic] de su Provincia en las Islas Filipinas* (Barcelona: Imprenta y Litografía de Henrich y Compañía, 1900-1902), libro I, cap. xxiii, 170, n. 1.

²¹ John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565-1700* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), 36, 172-76.

²² Corpuz, *The Bureaucracy in the Philippines*, 55.

The king and the viceroy of New Spain appointed archbishops, with the obsequious approval of Rome, and embodied the frequent confusion of authority between Church and State in the Spanish empire. Often regular clergy themselves, archbishops were disposed to take sides on issues of preference, and heated disputes arose over the privilege of visitation—a complicated situation in the Philippines due to the regular clergy's retention of the administration of parish churches throughout the colonial period. In one example, Governor Pedro de Arandía (1754-1759) upon his arrival immediately entered into hostile relations with the regular orders over the matter of razing numerous churches that lay just outside the city wall and which might provide bastions for invading enemies, a policy strenuously opposed by Archbishop Pedro de la Santísima Trinidad.²³

In the late 1670s and 1680s, the most notorious dispute occurred between Governor Juan de Vargas (1678-1684) and Archbishop Felipe Pardo. Vargas had exiled Pardo, ostensibly for ignoring royal decrees, and when the succeeding governor, Gabriel de Curzulaegui, restored him, he persuaded the incoming governor to heighten the antagonism of Vargas' *residencia*, which lasted for four years.²⁴ Heated disputes also arose between the governor and the office of the Inquisition in 1668, and between Governor Fernando de Bustamente and the Church in 1717, as the newly arrived Bustamente attempted to call in debts owed to the treasury and investigated irregularities—some of which involved the Church. In the resulting riots, Bustamente himself was killed in 1719.²⁵

Arriving Philippine governors frequently stepped into a nest of contention and punitive zeal as they conducted the *residencias* of their predecessors. Presumably, each arrived in the Philippines bearing something of a burden to create a miracle to salvage the colony. In addition, resentful *audiencia* officials sometimes met incoming galleons at the *embarcadero* of San Bernardino and traveled the last leg of the journey into Manila Bay in the company of the arriving governor, thereby gaining access before the sitting governor had the chance to do so.

Hurtado de Corcuera, the most notorious and one of the most acclaimed Philippine governors, provides the best example of

²³ Marta María Manchado López, "Las relaciones entre la autoridad civil y las órdenes religiosas en Filipinas durante el gobierno de don Pedro Manuel de Arandía," *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 53:1 (1996):38.

²⁴ Corpuz, *The Bureaucracy in the Philippines*, 55.

²⁵ Corpuz, *The Bureaucracy in the Philippines*, 55-56.

pugnacity and graft and of the resulting resentment that it generated. He is remembered for a number of questionable acts: refusing to dispatch the 1635 galleons to Mexico; favoring the Society of Jesus over other religious orders in the colony; engaging in a showdown with Archbishop Guerrero; repressing a sizable rebellion of Chinese in 1639; withdrawing the Spanish outpost at Formosa; claiming Macau for Spain when he learned of Portuguese independence; and leading a successful military expedition to Sulu and Mindanao in 1637-1638. Due to his victories over the Muslim belligerents in the south of the archipelago, he is considered the last of the Spanish conquistadors.²⁶

In addition to becoming a military hero, Hurtado de Corcuera took advantage of his authority by attempting to entirely remake certain aspects of Spanish policy in the islands. While succeeding admirably in several such endeavors, he was accused of bungling a few others and proceeded to make lasting enemies. The governor shamelessly enriched himself, thus arousing further resentment. Diego Collado, a contemporary Dominican priest and scholar at the University of Santo Tomás in Manila, reportedly referred to the governor as "son of the devil" and "scourge of God."²⁷

The truth about Hurtado de Corcuera lies somewhere between brigand and hero. Historians of the colonial Philippines, for instance, have expressed divergent opinions on the matter. Charles Henry Cunningham is fulsome in his praise, presumably in keeping with the values of his time. Nicholas Cushner is measured in his assessment but still does not hesitate to praise the governor and his achievements, while Onofre Corpuz places him in the company of a very short list of competent governors.²⁸ However, Isacio Rodríguez Rodríguez, an

²⁶ Referred to as "The Last Conquistador" in La Costa, *Jesuits*, chap. 16, Cushner states that the "governor was placed in the distinguished company of the conquistadors." Cushner, *Spain*, 163. See also William J. McCarthy, "Between Policy and Prerogative: Malffeasance in the Inspection of the Manila Galleons at Acapulco, 1637," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 2:2 (1993):163-83.

²⁷ Collado initially had established a cordial relationship with the governor, as they traveled on the same vessel from New Spain and agreed on the possibility of a mission to China. Subsequently, Collado and others became disenchanted with the governor's penchant for graft and over the controversy as to whether the religious orders should be permitted to participate in the galleon trade. See Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 29:26. Excerpted from Diego Aduarte, *Historia de la Provincia del Sancto Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Philipinas, Iapon y China* (Manila: En el Colegio de Sancto Thomas, por Luis Beltran impressor, 1640), 1639.

²⁸ Cushner, *Spain*, chap. 16, 377-403; and Corpuz, *The Bureaucracy in the Philippines*, 128. Those worthy of being named in this context (governors or acting

Augustinian priest and author of a multi-volume history of his order in the Philippines, condemned Hurtado de Corcuera as a thief.²⁹

Hurtado de Corcuera, a member of the Order of Alcántara, had proven his mettle by fighting a number of years in Flanders and by serving as *maestre de campo* at Lima.³⁰ He arrived from his previous post as governor of Panamá to Manila, anxious to tackle the most pressing problems of the Philippine colony, most notably its chronic insolvency, inability to bring the Muslim populace of the southern islands of the archipelago under some semblance of Spanish rule, and the prevention of slave raiding against the king's subjects. He made significant headway against the Muslims via a markedly successful campaign against Magindanau and Sulu; indeed, the loot exceeded the costs of the expedition. Other issues of note during his tenure included the ongoing Dutch threat to Manila; financial woes that resulted from the failure of the Acapulco galleon to sail (1635 and 1637); the wreck of one of the largest ever galleons, ostensibly laden with Hurtado de Corcuera's private treasure (1638); the rebellion of the Chinese community (1639); the expulsion of Portuguese Catholics from Japan (1639); the independence of Portugal (1640); and the loss of Formosa (1641).³¹

Regarding the colony's fiscal shortcomings, the new governor proposed to give the Philippines a balanced budget within four years.³² Hurtado de Corcuera hoped to address the pressing budgetary shortfalls through a number of expedients. He sought, but failed, to obtain an increase in the *permiso*, the amount of cargo legally permitted to be shipped for sale on the galleons to Acapulco. He advocated increasing revenue from the Acapulco galleon trade by means of more invasive inspections; this too was eventually disallowed.³³ He sought to limit, or

governors) are Antonio Morga (*oidor* of the *audiencia*), Hurtado de Corcuera, Simón de Anda y Salazar, Leandro de Viana (*real fiscal*), and José Basco y Vargas.

²⁹ Isacio Rodríguez Rodríguez, personal conversation with author during visit to the Colegio Real de los Padres Agustinos at Valladolid, February 1987. Isacio Rodríguez Rodríguez, *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniiana del Smo. Nombre de Jesús de Filipinas* (Manila: [n.p.], 1965).

³⁰ Cushner supports the claim that Hurtado de Corcuera was and had been an excellent soldier. Cushner, *Spain*, 377.

³¹ For information on these events, see Cushner, *Spain*, 158-66; and La Costa, *Jesuits*, chap. 16.

³² Cushner, *Spain*, 160.

³³ Philip IV to Palafox y Mendoza, Cédula sobre el comercio Filipino, 30 September 1639, Archivo General de Indias, Seville (hereinafter cited as AGI), Filipinas 340, vol. 2, fols. 13-17.

at least control, the trade with the Portuguese at Macau, of which he was a participant.³⁴ He kept personal custody of the royal safe, closely monitored the sale of *boletas* (licenses) to ship merchandise on the galleons, and collected the *medias anatas* (fees) amounting to half a year's salary to be collected from officials upon assumption of duties, authorized in 1633. He increased the importation of spices from Ternate for trans-shipment to New Spain, thus increasing commercial profits by the sale of goods which did not have to be purchased from the Chinese. Finally, and with the most notable returns, he significantly increased the sale of residency permits to the Chinese.³⁵

Hurtado de Corcuera's looked first to commercial matters, which he hoped would solve the colony's fiscal difficulties. Second in importance only to the defense of Manila, trade provided virtually the sole income for Spaniards in the colony and, in successful years, returned sizable profits. The commercial arena offered the most extensive potential for exercising (and exceeding) his authority and increasing his private fortune. Regulation of trade depended on the procurement and maintenance of the galleons: the assignation of lading space thereupon, the establishment of prices and collection of duties (both on out-going goods and those brought from China and other regional locations), and enforcement of the prescribed limits on the volume of the trade.

The laws that addressed these factors were issued piecemeal, most frequently in the form of royal *cédulas*, or decrees, while others were issued as ordinances by the Philippine governors themselves. There was no comprehensive body of regulations covering the trade until the 1734 compilation of the *Leyes de Indias*, which incorporated laws in force in the early eighteenth century.³⁶ No attempt had been made to regulate the trade until the early 1580s, when wealthy *limeños* sought, with their ready supply of silver, to participate in the attractive

³⁴ His *residencia* charges include his having sent a private trading ship to Macau, from which he profited personally and entirely. *Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Residencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, Governador y Capitan General que fue de las Yslas Filipinas*, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173, Charge #20.

³⁵ Cushner, *Spain*, 160-62.

³⁶ Philippine Commerce and the Manila Galleon Collection, Real Tribunal y Consulado de Manila, Baltasar Doncel, BANC MSS 91/111z, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Renewed interest in the trade occurred with its notable increase in volume in the early eighteenth century. See Carmen Yuste-López, *El comercio de la Nueva España con Filipinas, 1590-1785* (Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1984), 34-36.

trade. At that time, a 1582 royal *cédula* forbade direct trade between Peru and Manila because sailing from both New Spain and Peru would complicate the trade's oversight. Despite the ban, Peruvian viceroy Francisco de Toledo sent a ship to Manila in 1590. Although the ship was seized by the Portuguese in Asian waters, the desire for more widespread participation in the Manila trade was begrudgingly recognized; the complete ban on the Lima-Manila trade was altered slightly to allow "excess" goods to enter Peru via Acapulco, but even that trade became a problem for peninsular and other administrators, as *limeño* merchants frequently outbid other buyers at Acapulco or were allowed to pre-arrange sales. Eventually, the Crown forbade commerce between Acapulco and Lima, though it was clear by the early 1590s that, if permitted, the Manila trade would accept all interested parties.³⁷

Various imposts were introduced in the 1580s and 1590s. A 2 percent fee assessed in Manila for the building of the city wall remained in effect from 1591 to 1596. At the port of Acapulco, the *almojarifazgo* was collected at a rate of 12 pesos per *tonelada*, until 1586 when it was increased to 45 pesos and in 1591 changed to a flat rate of 10 percent of the Acapulco value.³⁸ A set of regulations was issued in 1593 to prevent the drain of Peruvian silver to Asia and to obviate the need for extensive inspections of the galleons. Officials limited the Pacific trade to the Manila-Acapulco route and to two ships per year, each carrying a maximum of 300 *toneladas*.³⁹ The galleons could carry merchandise up to the value of 250,000 pesos at Manila, and merchants could receive 500,000 pesos in exchange at Acapulco.⁴⁰ These regulations eliminated the need for close inspection at Acapulco, which in any event would have been a tedious process to remove the

³⁷ Woodrow Borah, *Early Colonial Trade and Navigation between Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954), 121, 124.

³⁸ William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: Dutton, 1939), 180-81.

³⁹ The exact size of this unit, especially in the Pacific, is open to dispute. It is known that the Pacific galleons (and the Portuguese East Indiamen) were the largest afloat. Pierre Chaunu feels only sufficiently confident to claim that "on the whole, the trade was carried in very large ships. They were certainly larger than the largest in use in the Atlantic." Original text reads: "dans l'ensemble, le mouvement est le fait de tres gros navires, ils seront, bientôt, plus gros que les plus gros en usage dans l'Atlantique." Pierre Chaunu, *Les Philippines et le Pacifique des Ibériques* (Paris: SEVPEN, 1958), 147. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are by the author.

⁴⁰ *Cédula* from Philip IV, Valladolid, *a postrero de diciembre 1604*, AGI, Filipinas 2, doc. 269b [a re-affirmation of the 1593 regulations]: "y que en ninguna manera exceda la cantidad de mercaderias que se traxere cada ano de las dichas Philipinas a la nueva Espana de 250,000 pesos de ocho reales como esta dispuesto, ni el retorno de principal, y ganancia en dinero de los quinientos mil pesos."

wrappings from the cargo intended to guard against ruinous shipboard conditions. Re-issued in 1604 and 1619, these regulations remained in effect until 1734, when the limit was raised to 300,000 pesos.⁴¹

The Philippine governor had additional responsibilities in dispatching the Acapulco galleons. Mandates were issued from time to time in conjunction with the selection of sailing dates, the conduct of the voyage, the manner of assessment of fees, and the inspection of cargoes. Moreover, those in charge of the sailing were continually ordered to honor a schedule that would minimize the chance of a wreck due to adverse weather conditions: depart from Manila by the end of June and from Acapulco in February. Captains of the voyages were also subjected to regulations, typically promulgated by the governors, including such aspects of the voyage regarding the conduct of persons on board, the prevention of women traveling alone from Acapulco, the restriction of smoking and minimization of cooking fires, and the prohibition of veering off course. The latter was a constant temptation as it was believed that rich islands might be found in the north Pacific, the so-called *Isla de Oro* and *Isla de Plata*. Other regulations eventually restricted participation in the galleon trade to those with 8,000 pesos worth of capital and elaborated procedures, which accompanied the registering and loading of cargoes and the collection and disposition of monies.⁴²

Cargo space on the outbound Acapulco galleons was the most sought after commodity in colonial Manila, and governors were in a position both to control and profit.⁴³ Since commerce was virtually the only occupation undertaken by Spaniards in Manila, and any amount of merchandise shipped to Mexico was sure to find a buyer, a unique system was devised to facilitate matters. Purchases of Chinese goods generally were undertaken wholesale by means of the *pancada*, designed to make Chinese goods available at standard prices and to negotiate those prices, somewhat the reverse of the system that operated at Canton.⁴⁴ Goods were then available for shipment to

⁴¹ Schurz, *Manila Galleon*, 155; and Cushner, *Spain*, 128-29.

⁴² Schurz, *Manila Galleon*, 155; Cushner, *Spain*, 128-29; and Charles R. Boxer, "Sailing Orders for the Manila Galleons of 1635-1636," *Terrae Incognitae* 4 (1972):7-17.

⁴³ According to Corpuz, "Nothing can show this [misuse of prerogatives] more effectively than the...graft and corruption which they practised in connection with the galleon trade." Corpuz, *The Bureaucracy in the Philippines*, 50.

⁴⁴ Schurz, *Manila Galleon*, 76-78. *Pancada* describes the procedure of the Spaniards' trading in toto for the Chinese goods each year, eventually replaced by the late

Acapulco. Referred to as the *repartimiento*, not to be confused with the American institution of the same name, each citizen of Manila, including widows and orphans, was entitled to ship merchandise on the galleons. The governor allotted each individual a certain number of *boletas*, or vouchers, which entitled him or her to a specified amount of cargo space. Merchandise could then be acquired in the requisite volume and shipped, or the *boletas* could be sold to a merchant more inclined to go through the process of obtaining trade goods. Suited to the financial and fiscal conditions at Manila, the system was notable for its universal access.⁴⁵

Allocation of *boletas* depended upon several factors: wealth, social status, and length of residence in the colony. Despite its fairness, the system was liable to abuse by influential persons or ambitious speculators. At the outset, the majority of Manila's Spanish *vecinos* actually did ship merchandise, but soon the effects of abuse and privilege came to be felt, and fewer and fewer names were found on the ships' manifests. Further, the Misericordia de Manila became the prominent investor in the galleon trade, serving as a lending institution for many merchants.⁴⁶

By 1604, the *repartimiento* had become so rife with favoritism that the authority to allocate lading space was transferred from the governor to the newly created Junta de Repartimiento, comprised of the governor, the senior *oidor* of the *audiencia*, the *fiscal* (chief attorney of the colony), two *regidores* (members of the *cabildo*), and the archbishop of Manila.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the creation of the junta did not entirely prevent abuses from arising due to the extreme desirability of the cargo space and the tendency of governors or other individuals to intervene in the process. Furthermore, the junta could do nothing to prevent speculation in *boletas*, nor prevent frauds perpetrated against vulnerable widows or young orphans eager for ready cash.

In 1635, soon after his arrival, Governor Hurtado de Corcuera usurped the entire authority of the junta as part of his program to

seventeenth century with a *feria*. According to John E. Wills, Jr., "the word is a Manila neologism of unknown origin." *The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644*, vol. 8 of *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 356. It is used without discussion of the term's origin by Schurz, *Manila Galleon*, 74-78, and by Philip Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 143.

⁴⁵ Schurz, *Manila Galleon*, 158-64.

⁴⁶ Cushner, *Spain*, 139-52.

⁴⁷ Schurz, *Manila Galleon*, 156.

stabilize the economy of the colony. For this action he received criticism from some quarters, while others lauded his attempt to break the stranglehold that wealthy interests (both lay and clerical) had established over the *repartimiento*. It was, however, a presumptuous act, and began to earn him the enmity of several sectors, particularly of the archbishop of Manila, whose alienation later proved a difficulty.

Hurtado de Corcuera also began to monitor the shipping itself. His ambitious program began immediately; he ordered the already laden galleons of 1635 not to sail, claiming that he had seen warehouses at Acapulco loaded with unsold merchandise from Manila.⁴⁸ In this instance, Hurtado de Corcuera's decision cost Manila a year's income, later constituting one of the charges in his *residencia*. The following year, he personally supervised the lading, taking note of the fact that the amount of registered merchandise had been loaded long before the piles were diminished. Hurtado de Corcuera's decision not to send galleons to Acapulco again in 1637 proved to be the episode that precipitated a continuous stream of complaints against him by Mexican officials for his intransigence, which constituted another formal charge against him.

For the second time in three years, Hurtado de Corcuera had taken action that eliminated the colony's only ready source of income. In 1637, however, he had a more pointed reason for cancellation of the sailing, namely the rigorous inspection of the cargo of the 1636 galleons upon their arrival at Acapulco undertaken by *visitador* Don Pedro de Quiroga y Moya. Quiroga evaluated the cargo at ten times the permitted amount, around 2,500,000 pesos, proceeded to seize the excess, and levied severe penalties.⁴⁹ This episode so incensed the Philippine governor and community that he took the calculated risk of sacrificing an additional year's income in hope of having the new policy of inspection rescinded. In any event, his voice was heard, and Philip IV issued a *cédula* forbidding further inspections.⁵⁰ In the

⁴⁸ *Libro de Gobierno del Señor Don Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera*, Philippine Collection, Lot 523, vols. 1-4, MS 21534 (1), Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. This decision did and does elude understanding, as any amount of merchandise always found a buyer at Acapulco. It is also notable, though, that merchants at Macau during a slightly earlier period claimed that there was more than sufficient silk available to satisfy markets in Japan, Goa, and Malacca, so that no additional trade needed to be conducted with Canton—perhaps a ruse to keep others, including other Portuguese, out of Canton.

⁴⁹ McCarthy, "Between Policy and Prerogative," 178.

⁵⁰ Philip IV to Hurtado de Corcuera, 8 December 1638, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Reales Cédulas Philipinas, tomo VI, fol. 112v.

interim, the colony suffered several years of its worst economic plight—a situation for which Hurtado de Corcuera received more than his share of the blame.

In addition to dealing with the colony's economy, Hurtado de Corcuera made efforts to increase military efficiency and managed one noted success. To make more effective use of idle hands, he transferred many sailors to Ternate to man the garrison there, while in Manila he built a soldiers' hospital with a chapel. His most dramatic success, and his greatest triumph, was the military campaign against Magindanau and Jolo in 1637-1638. The Spaniards maintained a garrison on the island of Mindanao at Zamboanga, but it did not prevent the customary slaving raids into the Visayas further to the north. The persons being seized as slaves, while victims of a traditional practice, were now Spanish subjects and needed to be protected by the governor. However, the recalcitrance of the Muslims in the south of the archipelago remained a grave challenge to Spanish rule.⁵¹

For several decades, hostility reigned unabated. The most notable raids from Magindanau into the Visayas occurred in 1603, 1606, 1608, 1613, and 1634.⁵² A memorable result of the 1603 raid was the capture of a Jesuit priest, Melchor Hurtado, by a fifty-vessel incursion to the village of Dulag at Leyte. The priest was released at Cebu the following year and later returned to Magindanau as an ambassador of Governor Pedro de Acuña.⁵³ Not harmed by his captors, Father Hurtado even came to befriend them in a rare instance of amiability. The 1608 raid at Leyte was remembered for the raiding party's arrival in seventy-seven *caracoas* and for taking many captives.⁵⁴

Sultan Kudarat was the most formidable opponent of the Spaniards during the protracted Moro wars. His prowess was legendary and his raids into the Visayas many and effective.⁵⁵ During the early

⁵¹ Scott, *Barangay*, 175-76; Ana María Prieto Lucena, *El contacto hispano-indígena en Filipinas según la historiografía de los siglos XVI y XVII* (Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba Servicio de Publicaciones, 1993), 236; and Anthony Reid, *The Lands Below the Winds*, volume 1 of *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 129-36.

⁵² La Costa, *Jesuits*, 292-312.

⁵³ La Costa, *Jesuits*, 303.

⁵⁴ Copia de un capítulo de carta de la audiencia de Manila escrito a su Magd en 8 de julio de 1608, AGI, Filipinas 7, ramo 3, núm. 3y, fol. 83.

⁵⁵ His memory is revered in Mindanaoan memory to this day. Ruurdje Laarhoven, *Triumph of Moro Diplomacy: The Maguindanao Sultanate in the 17th Century* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1989), 33; and La Costa, *Jesuits*, 382.

1630s, Kudarat's reputation was such that it looked as though the Spaniards would never be able to incorporate Mindanao into their colony. In the particular raid that provoked Hurtado de Corcuera's retaliation, three Spaniards had been seized, in addition to the group of indigenous Visayans. Hurtado de Corcuera mounted his expedition with great enthusiasm, leading his men personally, and impressing them with his courage:

His eating, sleeping and those additional things pertaining to the treatment of his person were that of an ordinary soldier. First, he set his hands to the buildings and fortifications, helped all the factions in the positions of greatest risk, and because others rested, he himself went around in the night visiting the barracks, and also the [sentry] posts of the hillside. Then the piety with which he responded to the sick and visited the wounded, and regaled them as much as those who stormed the battlements and did not suffer [injury] was admirable.⁵⁶

The Spaniards defeated the enemy, brought back a party of the Visayan captives, and returned to a memorable hero's welcome at Manila. The ensuing parade was long remembered as one of the most lavish and festive occasions of the colonial era. The governor, while feted at the time, was later criticized for his extravagance in having spent so much money and so many lives for so little return.

In claiming to seek to protect the royal initiative, Hurtado de Corcuera established a hostile relationship between himself and Archbishop Hernando Guerrero, who was seeking to retain the independence of the Church against what he felt were the excesses of the *patronato* as it was employed so far from Castile. Contention between governors and archbishops was one of the perennial difficulties in the colonial Philippines. Part of the problem arose from

⁵⁶ Sucesos de 1637-1638, Archivo Histórico Nacional (hereinafter cited as AHN), Madrid, "Diversos," Indias 332, unsigned pamphlet. Cushner argues that the situation was less heroic, that Hurtado de Corcuera invited the rajah to parley and then attacked his party. Cushner, *Spain*, 162. He bases this contention on accounts of Archbishop Guerrero, who was entirely hostile to the governor. The account quoted herein may be weighted in support of the governor by his own influence; it is probably the same document described by Cushner as a defense of Hurtado de Corcuera. Corcuera to King, 31 July 1638, AGI, Filipinas 8, ramo 8, doc. 258.

the fact that the archbishop served as interim governor when needed.⁵⁷ In the early 1590s, for example, Governor Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas clashed pointedly with Bishop Domingo de Salazar. During the 1680s, the most notorious difficulties occurred between Governor Vargas de Hurtado and Archbishop Felipe Pardo. Pardo, a Dominican, requisitioned money from parishes and from the Jesuit returns on the Acapulco galleon to divert them to the enhancement of the Dominican University of Santo Tomás. He also relegated the Augustinian Recollects entirely to the island of Mindoro, stripping them of some of their lands elsewhere. For this effrontery, the *audiencia* exiled Pardo to Pangasinan in 1683, where he remained until pardoned by the succeeding governor, Gabriel de Curuzealegui y Arriola, the following year. As a result of this contentiousness, Vargas' *residencia* lasted four years.⁵⁸

Another conflict occurred between Governor Pedro Manuel de Arandía y Santisteban and Archbishop Pedro de la Santísima Trinidad in the 1750s. Arandía spearheaded an initiative to increase military security around Manila, in view of a recent increase in raids throughout the Visayas by southern Muslims. In so doing, he insisted that several churches near Intramuros (the walled city) be dismantled, ostensibly since they could be used as fortifications by invaders. It appeared, however, that the governor intended to punish several of the orders for their audacious behavior, as they had been quite vocal about criticizing the alleged excesses that the *alcaldes mayores* promulgated against the indigenous population.⁵⁹

The tense situation between Hurtado de Corcuera and Archbishop Guerrero in the 1630s led to several of the governor's most peevish and headstrong acts. The central dramatic episode was precipitated by the arrest and execution of an artilleryman, Francisco de Nava, who killed his slave concubine and sought sanctuary in the Augustinian convent.⁶⁰ Hurtado de Corcuera ordered his forcible removal from the convent, and he was tried and then hanged in front of the convent. The archbishop, who had in fact initially ordered Nava

⁵⁷ Cushner, *Spain*, 156.

⁵⁸ Corpuz, *The Bureaucracy in the Philippines*, 37.

⁵⁹ Manchado López, "Las relaciones entre la autoridad civil y las órdenes religiosas," 2-5.

⁶⁰ Casimiro Díaz Toledano and Gaspar de San Agustín, *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas: la temporal por las armas de nuestros católicos reyes de España...* (Valladolid: Luis N. De Gaviria, 1890), chap. XVI:327-33, tells the basic story; it is also told in some detail by Cushner, *Spain*, 162-65.

either to sell or marry the slave girl, resented the violation of sanctuary. He put the city under interdict and threatened to excommunicate the governor. As the bells rang out the imposition of the interdict, Hurtado de Corcuera ordered soldiers to go to the archbishop's residence and place him under arrest. Finding the archbishop dressed in full vestments and holding the Blessed Sacrament, the soldiers deferred from placing their hands on him. Eventually the elderly man fell over, dropping the monstrance and thus rendering himself vulnerable to arrest.

Hurtado de Corcuera exiled the archbishop to the island of Corregidor. When he was permitted to return to Manila, it was clear that the governor's authority had triumphed. The king harshly reprimanded the archbishop:

If you had borne in mind what was advantageous to my service and conformable to the dignity of your person and office, you might well have avoided all this. I therefore deem it necessary to inform you (as I now do) that I consider myself to have been uncommonly ill served in this whole affair.... You will do well in the future to conduct yourself with greater circumspection and restraint....⁶¹

Moreover, the governor also claimed to have recognized more than the issue of sanctuary in the matter:

It seems to me that Your Majesty has sent me here not to govern the Philippines but to conquer the religious because in the eleven months I have been here I have done nothing but argue with them over jurisdiction and the royal patronage.⁶²

Hurtado de Corcuera's treatment of the Chinese population generated further strife, as it led to violent insurrection and later formed several of the charges in his *residencia*.⁶³ The combination of his

⁶¹ Quoted in La Costa, *Jesuits*, 382.

⁶² Quoted in Cushner, *Spain*, 165.

⁶³ Estimates say that upward of 40,000 were involved in the 1639 uprising. *Verdadera relacion de varios sucesos que se han visto en muchas partes del Oriente de Filipinas, China y la India desde el ano de 1639 por noviembre hasta el ano de 1645...*, Ant3nio de Santa Maria, 1645, Archivo Franciscano Ibero-Oriental, Sinica

whirlwind attempts at fiscal reform and the growing number of Chinese inhabitants in the colony created the conflict. Goods and services provided by the Chinese represented an essential part of the Spanish residents' survival, but the relationship between the two groups seemed vexed and mutually paranoid.⁶⁴ A similar situation had arisen in 1603, when the high numbers of Chinese led the Spaniards to arm themselves, in turn causing fear and rebellion among the Chinese. In order to control this sizable population, in the 1630s, Hurtado de Corcuera and his personal secretary and *contador* Simon Delgado followed the established tradition of issuing residency permits. The policy of selling permits had followed in the wake of the 1603 Chinese uprising, employed as a means both of raising revenue and monitoring the numbers of immigrants.⁶⁵

Christian converts and the indigent were occasionally excused from paying for the permits.⁶⁶ The administration, in fact, treated Christian converts favorably. One such privilege was the awarding of contracts to provision the galleons. In 1638, for instance, contracts were issued to Domingo Dizon for the purchase of beans, to Tianco [*stet*] for pork, and to Martin Chulxan for several types of drugs, live hens, dried fish and shrimp, and white sugar. Another contract was awarded to Gin Say Grande, leader of the carpenters, for wood. His preferment was unusual since he was not a Christian; he was presumably recognized for his position among the carpenters and access to wood.⁶⁷

Franciscano, vol. 2, MS Pe Antonio de Sta Maria: "Habiendo sucedido en esta Ciudad de Manila el levantarse contra ella mas de 40,000 Chinos...."

⁶⁴ María Fernanda García de los Arcos, "Grupos étnicos [*sic*] y clases sociales en las Filipinas de finales del siglo XVIII," *Archipel* 57 (1999):70.

⁶⁵ Four thousand permits were sold in 1603 and six thousand in 1605. Alberto Santamaría, "The Chinese Parian," in *The Chinese in the Philippines, 1570-1770*, ed. Alfonso Felix (Manila: Solidaridad, 1966), 76-81; and Milagros Guerrero, "The Chinese in the Philippines," in Felix, *The Chinese in the Philippines*, 33. Regarding the variable legal status of the Chinese, see Tatiana Seijas, "Native Vassals: Chinos, Indigenous Identity, and Legal Protection in Early Modern Spain," in *Western Visions of the Far East in a Trans-Pacific Age, 1522-1657*, ed. Christina H. Lee (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012), chap. 8.

⁶⁶ Cuentas de Real Hacienda, 1638, AGI, Contaduría 1218, ramo 3. See also Charge #21 in *Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera*, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173, fol. 5v: "Que tubo estrecha amistad y correspondencia con Chun quian, Sangley, infiel; al qual ynterponia para muchos negociaciones, superyntendencia de las obras y juegos."

⁶⁷ Compras de Generos, AGI, Contaduría 1218, Cuentas de Real Hacienda desde 12 de enero de 1636 a 7 de enero de 1639, *Mar de Manila y Maluco*. Payments were made to Domingo Dizon on 6 July 1638 (fol. 1105v), to Tianco on 3 July 1638 (fol. 1106), to

Demand for the licenses was so high that government officials were repeatedly accused of profiteering by selling an excess of licenses and pocketing a portion of the proceeds. Delgado and Hurtado de Corcuera were both so charged in the *residencia*. As a result, far more Chinese lived in Manila and environs than were officially authorized to do so. In the uprising of 1603, for instance, Spaniards claimed to have killed 24,000 Chinese, far more than the Spanish administration had licensed to live there.⁶⁸

The Chinese, aware of the alarm their numbers caused among Spanish officials, attempted to curry favor. In 1637, for example, the community presented the governor with a gift of cash intended for the king of Spain, in appreciation for permission to live and work so peaceably and profitably in the islands.⁶⁹ In addition to failing to forward the gift to the king, Hurtado de Corcuera thereafter stepped up the collection of licensing fees, added a 25 peso head tax, and forced a number of Chinese to relocate and work in rice fields without pay.⁷⁰ The increase in fees amounted to 3,909 licenses sold by Delgado in 1638. This brought a profit of 5,374 pesos. In 1639, 3,682 licenses were sold for a total of 5,072 pesos.⁷¹ These issues—and the particularly large numbers of Chinese residents at the time along with the unusually small number of Spaniards—helped to bring about the violent 1639 rising.

The governor also is alleged to have enriched himself considerably at the expense of the king, the treasury, and the citizenry

Chulxan on 8 July 1638 (fol. 1105v), and to Gin Say Grande on 31 August 1638 (fol. 1108). Several terms were used to refer to these Chinese merchants: *sanglely xpiano* (Manila-Chinese Christian); *sanglely* or *sangy* (Manila-Chinese); and *sanglely infiel* (Manila-Chinese infidel).

⁶⁸ Guerrero, "The Chinese in the Philippines, 1570-1770," 25.

⁶⁹ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 29:28; Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Residencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173, Charge #37: "Sobre hauer acetado y Reciuido de los Sangleyes una donacion de 12,946 pesos."

⁷⁰ Guerrero, "The Chinese in the Philippines," 30-32.

⁷¹ Residencia de Don Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera, Manila, 24 January 1645, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara 409-B, fols. 244-45. Another document from the Cuentas de Real Hacienda records 139,595 pesos, 6 *tomines*, 3 *granos* collected for 1638. Cuentas de Real Hacienda, 27 July 1638, AGI, Contaduría 1218, fol. 994v. The latter is perhaps a more realistic figure, as the smaller sums were probably collected by Delgado alone and perhaps kept by him. Such a supposition is borne out by a charge against him to the effect that 5,029 Chinese arrived at Manila in 1639, and that he collected 500 pesos from each of them, whereas he had been authorized to collect only 100. Cargos contra Simon Delgado, 1645, AGI, Escribanía de Cámara 409-A, fol. 4587.

of Manila. Many individuals spoke against him at his *residencia* on such matters. He was said to have acquired a vast amount of illegally obtained treasure, including several items which were seized at the time of his arrest: a gold plate, diamonds, a jeweled monstrance, pieces of enamelwork, and a reliquary. He also commandeered an elaborate gold plate and ewer which had been fashioned as a gift to the king from the Chinese community.⁷² In addition, the governor appears to have been a regular purchaser of diamonds and other precious stones at less than their market value.⁷³ The cargo of one of the 1638 galleons lost en route to Mexico had been composed primarily of the governor's abundant personal treasure.⁷⁴

Upon the arrival of Diego Fajardo Chacón, the Philippines' newly appointed governor, Hurtado de Corcuera began to suffer the consequences of his widespread unpopularity. Hurtado de Corcuera later argued that Fajardo was determined to attack him even before the latter arrived in the archipelago. The out-going governor was detained for five years at Manila, and his *residencia* can be seen to have been particularly harsh, even in the long series of some of the most acrimonious of such trials in the empire. The most grievous violations involved crimes against the royal treasury, and Hurtado de Corcuera's list was very incriminating.⁷⁵

⁷² Guerra de Manila, almojarifazgo, salaries..., 30 August 1645, AGI, Contaduría 1225, fol. 885.

⁷³ Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173, fol. 6, Charge #22: "Sobre hauer comprado diferentes joyas de Diamentes y otras piedras, a menos precio del que valian...."

⁷⁴ Marqués de Cadereyta to king, 8 July 1641, AGI, México 152, ramo 2, doc. 15. No doubt Hurtado de Corcuera sought to spirit it out of the colony before the end of his tenure as governor. The ships carried "gran cantidad de hazienda de su tio y suya." Hurtado de Corcuera is the referenced uncle; his nephew was the captain of the voyage—young and inexperienced and perhaps in charge of the safekeeping of the valuables. Charge #32 of the *residencia* accuses Hurtado de Corcuera of causing the wreck of the galleon by appointing his nephew as captain. Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, 27 April 1651, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173, fol. 8v.: "Perdiose [la nao a la Nueva España] la del ano de 638 por auer la encargado a D Juan Francisco de Corcuera su sobrino, soldado de poca experiencia."

⁷⁵ Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173. Another document from the original *residencia* materials gives the much smaller figure of 52,210 pesos, 7 *tomines*, 10 *granos*. Guerra de Manila, Almojarifazgo, salaries..., Manila, July 1645, AGI, Contaduría 1225, doc. 77, fols. 609-09v. It is likely to be only

Beyond the accusations of cheating the royal treasury, other charges included: unjustly imprisoning individuals;⁷⁶ allegedly selling offices, one to a nephew, and providing positions for another twenty-nine relatives and adherents;⁷⁷ invoking the name and authority of the *audiencia* when taking unilateral actions;⁷⁸ constructing excessive fortifications and failing to consult the treasury on this matter;⁷⁹ and lastly, forcing Indians, women, and children to work arduously and without pay.⁸⁰ There was also a good deal of resentment over Hurtado de Corcuera's close association with Chun Quian, a non-Christian, who procured items such as jewels and textiles for him at bargain prices and was awarded the title "superintendent of works." Hurtado de Corcuera's favoritism in this case was purported to be a significant cause of the 1639 uprising.⁸¹

a partial figure. Cunningham gives the still smaller figure of 25,000 pesos. Cunningham, *The Audiencia*, 138.

⁷⁶ Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173, fol. 1v, Charge #1: "Sobre prisiones ynjustas de los que refiere."

⁷⁷ Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173, fols. 1v, 2v, Charges #4 and #9: "Bendio los officios de Justicia, mar y Guerra...y Obligo a Vender su officio a un Regidor, que despues compro un sobrino de Don Sebastian...;" and "Acomodo en diferentes puestos, ocupaciones, y officios, 29 personas, parientes, criados, y allegados suyas."

⁷⁸ This perhaps best summed up his approach to governance, although it should be said that at the time of his arrival the *audiencia* consisted merely of himself and one *oidor*, Marcos Zapata. The Philippine governor was unique, as he served both as governor and president of the *audiencia*, even as the exercise of such authority seemed egregious to the complainants. Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, fol. 2, Charge #6: "Executo sin embargo de Apelacion a la Real Audiencia en los cassos particulares que se Refieren."

⁷⁹ Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173, fol. 3, Charge #12: "Excessos en obras, y fortificaciones sin consulta, y a costa de la Real hacienda...."

⁸⁰ Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173, Charges #31 and #50: "Malos tratamientos a Yndios, ymposiciones y cargas nueuas, hecholos trauajar en las fortificaciones con exceso, y quando se les pagayan algunos jornales, hera a menos precio, y en otras ocassiones trauhauan sin darlas paga, ni otra satisfacion." In this rendition, the charges are conflated. Presumably Charge #31 refers to the work and Charge #50 to the pay.

⁸¹ Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173, fol. 5v, Charge #21: "Que estubo estrecha Amistad, y correspondencia con Chun quian, Sangley, infiel;

The governor also procured many valuable items for himself, taking a gold font from the royal *caxa* and offering a pittance in return.⁸² On one occasion he removed monies in the amount of 104,609 pesos from the Casa de Misericordia.⁸³ He traded with the Portuguese during their war for independence, which the Crown had expressly forbidden. He even sent a ship to Macau on his own account, with a credit of more than 30,000 pesos from the royal treasury.⁸⁴ His inattention to the Spanish outpost at Formosa was alleged to be the cause of its loss to the Dutch.⁸⁵ The list highlights instance after instance of graft and abuse of power—notable in scope and scale. The variety of charges bears out the observation that a Philippine governor was held responsible for everything that occurred in the colony.

Convicted of 45 of the 59 charges, Hurtado de Corcuera was fined as much as 800,000 pesos and forced to spend five years imprisoned in Manila by order of Governor Fajardo. In 1646, he was permitted to travel to Mexico, where he began to fight the charges, initially by appearing before a series of judges. Finally, in 1651, he appealed the matter to the Council of the Indies in Spain.⁸⁶

Hurtado de Corcuera cited in his defense a number of irregularities in the proceedings of his *residencia* and imprisonment, arguing that Governor Fajardo held personal malice toward him. With regard to this last claim, he averred that, first and foremost, Fajardo was his staunch or "capital enemy," and that the latter had owed large sums of money for some time to Yñigo de Corcuera, a relative of Hurtado de

al qual ynterponia para muchos negociaciones, superintendencia de las obras y juegos."

⁸² Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173, fol. 9, Charge #38: "Saco de la caixa Real una fuente y jarro de oro de su Magd...."

⁸³ Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173, fol. 10v, Charge #46: "Saco de la caixa de la Misericordia 104,609 pessos y los presto a la Caxa Rl...."

⁸⁴ Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173, fol. 7, Charge #20: "Que teniendo nuevas del Alzamiento de Portugal por ceduas que hauia Reciuido de su Magd y hallandose en Manila algunos Portuguese de Macan con mas de 800,000 pesos de hacienda disimulo estos auisos, y los dejo salir...."

⁸⁵ Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173, fol. 7v, Charge #29: "Que por hauer desmantelado y tener malfortificados y guarnecidas algunas fuerzas de Ysla hermosa se perdio conquistadola los olandeses...."

⁸⁶ Consejo de Indias al Rey, 5 May 1651, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 4, núm. 127.

Corcuera. He also related that Fajardo had expressed his enmity openly, including making verbal comments during the course of his voyage to Manila in 1640, and had proceeded to demonstrate his hostility by consorting with Hurtado de Corcuera's enemies. Hurtado de Corcuera also claimed that his imprisonment had been conducted indecently and that the facility had been staffed with his known enemies.⁸⁷

According to Hurtado de Corcuera's *pleito* to the king, the death of his attorney interrupted the Manila appeal proceedings, presumably in 1644 or 1645, and the governor claimed that his case consequently suffered from lack of counsel, agency, and money. Fajardo proceeded to appoint an *oidor* of the *audiencia* to defend the former governor, but this gentleman did so only with reluctance, expressing his distaste for the responsibility. Moreover, the *oidor* was assisted by an individual that Hurtado de Corcuera claimed lacked experience. Thus, Hurtado de Corcuera argued that the *residencia* had been conducted unfairly and resulted in convictions with exorbitant fines and sentences.⁸⁸ The king, however, decided that, despite the irregularities, Corcuera's defense had been adequate.⁸⁹

The Council of the Indies did not pronounce on Hurtado de Corcuera's appeal until 1656. The council granted that Fajardo had been hostile and that he had had dealings with known enemies of Hurtado Corcuera. Moreover, the council agreed that Hurtado de Corcuera's imprisonment had been conducted "with indecency."⁹⁰ The Council of the Indies overturned his conviction and nullified the entire *residencia*. To Hurtado de Corcuera's detractors, it added to the sinister nature of his culpability. Nevertheless, the king rewarded him with the governorship of the Canary Islands, where he ended his days. The former governor of the Philippines had been vindicated, but only at the cost of immense tribulations. Evidently, he avoided paying any fines

⁸⁷ Consejo de Indias al Rey, 16 January 1648, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 3, núm. 86.

⁸⁸ Whatever the nature of the proceedings, it does appear that the fines were exorbitant. By way of comparison, Governor Simon de Anda y Salazar was fined at least 4,000 pesos in 1776, Jose Basco y Vargas was "heavily fined" in 1787, and Felix Beringuer de Marquina was fined 56,000 pesos in 1793. Cunningham, *The Audiencia*, 138-41. For Hurtado de Corcuera's amount, see *Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera*, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173.

⁸⁹ Consejo de Indias al Rey, 16 January 1648, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 3, núm. 86.

⁹⁰ *Relacion de el ultimo estado que tiene en justicia, la Ressidencia de Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera*, 4 June 1658, AGI, Filipinas 2, ramo 5, núm. 173, fol. 13: "Sumario de los Nulidades."

and was indeed able to spirit a good deal of wealth out of the Philippines. When the Dominican missionary, Domingo de Navarrete, traveled through Mexico in the 1650s, he noted the presence of several large trunks containing merchandise belonging to the former governor.⁹¹

During the latter part of the colonial era, corruption in the Philippines was almost a given; every government and Church official was thought to be more or less dishonest. Hurtado de Corcuera's reputation was one of degree rather than kind. Comments from as early as the 1580s denounced Philippine officials. Xavier Huetz de Lempis speaks of the *climat délétère*, a reference both to the humidity and the ubiquitous chase after wealth. Huetz de Lempis quotes a letter from 1893 to the effect that there is something unknown in the atmosphere of the Philippines that "transforms so often into knaves, those who, in Spain, pass for irreproachable."⁹² In addition, the court system was corrupt, according to Padre Ramón Alguesar, the parish priest of Cabutuan, who compared "...the court of the province of Iloilo to a band of thieves or a house of prostitution."⁹³ Steeped in the new sciences and pseudo-sciences of the nineteenth century, commentators looked for clues to behavior in climate and race, finding shortcomings in both areas in the Philippines.⁹⁴ Further, it had been observed that almost no Spaniard ever went to the Philippines voluntarily—or went

⁹¹ John Stanley Cummins, ed., *The Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo de Navarrete, 1618-1686* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), xxi.

⁹² "Je ne sais pas ce qu'il peut bien y avoir dans l'atmosphère des Philippines qui transforme si souvent en fripons ceux qui, en Espagne, passaient pour être irréprochables." "Letter of Gobernador Civil de Pangasinan Miguel Socias to the Ministre d'Outre Mer Antonio Maura, 12 July 1893," quoted in Huetz de Lempis, *L'Archipel*, 255.

⁹³ Huetz de Lempis, *L'Archipel*, 70.

⁹⁴ Linda Newson, *Conquest and Pestilence in the Early Spanish Philippines* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 14-17, 255. Newson describes the climatological disease environment. For the Spanish proto-scientific discussion of the humid American climate and its deleterious effects on inhabitants, see Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Nature, Empire, and Nation: Explorations of the History of Science in the Iberian World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 75-78. For a description of the nineteenth-century association of the colonial experience with intrinsic disease and decadence, see Alan Bewell, *Romanticism and Colonial Disease* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 27-65 and 277-95. One of the most prominent champions of climactic race theory was Louis Agassiz. See Edward Lurie, "Louis Agassiz and the Races of Man," *Isis* 45:3 (1954):227-42.

only with the thought of striking it rich and returning home quickly. While many sought to profit and leave, an element of devotion to the colony existed among officials and clergy, if not merchants.

The story of the *residencia* of Don Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera shows the personal initiative available to imperial officials far from Madrid, and possibly highlights a culture of corruption in the Philippines, including the process of the *residencia*. In addition, *residencia* proceedings demonstrate the harsh recriminations faced by many governors for their alleged misdeeds, and the potential or occasional effectiveness in attempting to control excessive conduct. As historian of the colonial *audiencias*, Charles Henry Cunningham includes Hurtado de Corcuera's in his list of the five harshest Philippine *residencias*.⁹⁵ A note of hostility marks many of the charges as well as the recorded depositions. The litany of charges brings forth a picture of a rapacious, headstrong, and acquisitive individual, one who no doubt had made a considerable number of enemies during his tenure as governor.⁹⁶

Hurtado de Corcuera, the "Last Conquistador," was not alone in this regard but has received the reputation of a notable scoundrel. The matters raised in the trial also highlight many of the divisive issues of the colony during a span of particularly volatile years. Also significant, the *residencia* was eventually overturned in its entirety, suggesting either its undue harshness or that Philippine governors could "get away with murder."⁹⁷ In the case of Sebastián Hurtado de

⁹⁵ Cunningham, *The Audiencia*, 138-44. Cunningham selects as the "most severe" *residencias* those of Gerónimo de Silva (1625), Hurtado de Corcuera (1644), Anda y Salazar (1776), Basco y Vargas (1787), and Beringuer de Marquina (1792). The regulations changed after 1799; they now stated that the *residencia* was to be conducted by an *oidor* appointed by the king for this particular purpose. Thus, outgoing governors were not so likely to suffer from the hostility of their enemies after their departure from office. Cédula of 24 August 1799, in Cunningham, *The Audiencia*, 131, n. 30, citing Joaquín Rodríguez San Pedro, *Legislación ultramarina* (Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico de José Fernández Cancela, 1865), 3:280-81.

⁹⁶ Personal venality was alleged as well, as he did things like keeping a slave boy captured during his sojourn to Mindanao and Jolo, despite express royal orders forbidding just such a thing. Seijas, "Native Vassals," 153-64.

⁹⁷ Murder was, in fact, alleged in two of the charges in Hurtado de Corcuera's *residencia* (Charges #10 and #15). The use of the term is curious and inflammatory, as he was actually accused of ordering the hasty trial, conviction, and execution of the soldier who had sought sanctuary in the Cathedral church after having stabbed his former concubine to death, and of not pursuing several of his own favorites who were accused of murder.

Corcuera, the *juicio de residencia* materials provide evidence of both rancor and license. Unusual in its excess, his case provides a cogent example of the potential for imperious behavior at that distant post.