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# Guido de Lavezariis

THE LIFE OF A FINANCIER OF THE CORONADO AND  
VILLALOBOS EXPEDITIONS

*Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint*

For most of its members, the Coronado Expedition of 1539–1542 was primarily a financial venture, as were nearly all the similar Spanish-led expeditions of the sixteenth century in the Americas. Both the opportunity and burden of funding such enterprises rested upon the individuals who planned and undertook them. The royal treasury rarely contributed funds, though the Council of the Indies did license reconnaissance and conquest missions. Individual expeditionaries invested funds to outfit and supply themselves and their retainers. Meanwhile, nonparticipant investors contributed large sums toward the general provisioning and maintenance of the expedition. The total thus invested, well in excess of half a million pesos in the case of the Coronado Expedition, was risked on the chance of acquiring lucrative returns in the form of booty, tribute, employment, and royal grants.

Without the aggregate outlay of a very large sum of money, an ambitious effort such as the Coronado Expedition was impossible. Approximately two thousand people needed to be outfitted and supplied for many months, if not

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several years, while they traveled thousands of miles, mostly on foot, toward a vaguely known goal, a place called Cibola. Equipment, people, and beasts of burden in the hundreds were necessary to transport the personnel and their supplies. This huge force required about seventy-five hundred head of livestock to provide meat over a period of many months. No less critical were the many people needed to care for and maintain the expeditionary infrastructure. Ships were also needed for periodic resupply. To mount an *entrada* to Cibola, therefore, was a decision not entered into lightly. Before recruitment of rank-and-file expedition members could begin, a cadre of large and medium investors had to be assembled.

Major investors in the expedition were first and foremost its organizers and instigators. They included Antonio de Mendoza, the viceroy of New Spain acting as a private citizen, who contributed some eighty-five thousand pesos, and his twenty-nine-year-old protégé, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado. Vázquez de Coronado, along with his in-laws the Estradas and Gutiérrez Caballerías, put in about seventy-one thousand pesos. The *adelantado* (perpetual governor) of Guatemala, Pedro de Alvarado, supplied about ninety thousand pesos. Luis de Castilla and probably Cristóbal de Oñate, two other prominent men in mid-sixteenth-century New Spain, also made significant contributions, although the size of their investments is unknown.<sup>1</sup> And there were other investors, but identifying them has proved a laborious and, for the most part, fruitless task. Late in 2007, however, while at work in the Archivo General de Indias in Sevilla, Spain, we came across documents that revealed investments in the expedition by another man. Until that moment we were neither familiar with his name nor aware that he had any connection with the Coronado Expedition.

His name is Guido de Lavezariis.<sup>2</sup> He has been claimed as a Basque but was of Genoese extraction.<sup>3</sup> Like his forebears, Lavezariis was a *vecino* (citizen with full political rights) of Sevilla, Spain, the country's embarkation point for the New World. Lavezariis claimed to be a "*caballero hidalgo* [a prominent minor noble]," and was the son of Sebastián de Lavezariis and Catalina de Chávez. He came to New Spain with his brother Luis in 1536.<sup>4</sup> That same year, survivors of the Pánfilo Narváez Expedition to La Florida, including Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, reported hearing about large, prosperous Native cities far to the north of Mexico City.<sup>5</sup> Within three years that information would launch the Coronado Expedition in an effort to bring those places into the Spanish orbit.

We do not yet know how Lavezariis came to be a man of means by 1539. Did he arrive in the New World already well-to-do? If not, did he acquire or vastly increase his assets after arriving in New Spain?<sup>6</sup> His willingness and

ability to invest heavily not only in the Coronado Expedition but also in similar later enterprises suggest that he may have been a banker. And his role as *contador* (accountant) and *tesorero* (treasurer) on two subsequent expeditions is consistent with such a supposition. The only known documentary reference to his occupation, though, is as a bookseller in the 1550s, well after the Coronado and Villalobos expeditions that he helped to fund.<sup>7</sup> Lavezariis's association with books befits his high level of literacy and his family's book-selling tradition, but would not seem to explain his access to considerable sums of cash.

Since the thirteenth century, Genoese merchant-bankers had been very active in Sevilla and were heavily involved in Spanish activities in the New World. Genoese bankers were instrumental in financially backing Spain's expeditions of reconnaissance and conquest, from Alonso Fernández de Lugo's conquest of La Palma in the Canary Islands and Christopher Columbus's first voyage to the Indies in 1492, to Francisco de Orellana's trip down the Amazon in 1544. Indeed, Lavezariis's numerous loans to members of the Coronado Expedition match exactly with the kind of activity typical of public Genoese banks of the period.<sup>8</sup>

Further evidence of Lavezariis's activity as a financial force appears in 1550, when he was associated with Cristóbal Rayzer and Lázaro Martín Verger, two German entrepreneurs who were also vecinos of Sevilla. They imported innovative mining equipment and techniques to New Spain and used Lavezariis's recommendation to secure the reward of *encomiendas*.<sup>9</sup> Incontrovertible proof of Lavezariis's position in a formal banking establishment, perhaps linked with family members in Sevilla, has not yet come to light, although we would be very surprised if this does not happen eventually.

At any rate, in 1539, when recruitment and organization of the Coronado Expedition was underway, Lavezariis came forward to "purchase and acquire things necessary for the men-at-arms" and to "loan money and give other things to captains and men-at-arms." In 1550 Mexico City merchant Pedro de Toledo testified that Lavezariis had "taken from his store large quantities of clothing, as well as *gineta* saddles, horseshoeing supplies, and silk for banners" for the expeditionaries. Lavezariis paid more than four thousand *castellanos* in cash for each category of goods. Among those whom he aided with the loan of money and goods were Captain don Pedro de Tovar (at least two thousand pesos), Captain General Vázquez de Coronado (about two thousand pesos), Captain don Rodrigo Maldonado, and Juan Pérez de Vergara, as well as other unnamed captains and members of the rank and file.<sup>10</sup> Lavezariis spent considerably more than twenty thousand pesos in this way to support the expedition. To put that amount in some perspective, a

common laborer of the day made about one hundred pesos a year. Only merchants, bankers, and the well-to-do had access to the large sums that Lavezariis invested in the expedition.

Lavezariis also sent a *criado*, or retainer, of his own, Cristóbal Gallego, on the expedition to Cíbola. He supplied Gallego with arms, horses, and trap-pings. When Gallego mustered into the expedition company at Compostela, Mexico, in February 1540, he declared that he had “one horse and native arms and armor.” All had evidently been purchased for him by Lavezariis. It remains unclear if Lavezariis was Gallego’s patron, employer, or a member of his family.<sup>11</sup> Gallego, an unassigned horseman as the entrada began, must not have stood out during the expedition because we find no record of him in the surviving contemporaneous documents.<sup>12</sup> There is every reason to suppose, though, that he survived the long trip to Cíbola, Tiguex, and the Great Plains, since relatively few of the European members of the expedition died, and Gallego was not among the known dead. Given Lavezariis’s later activities, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Gallego was to act as a buyer of merchandise and that he carried a significant amount of currency for that purpose. Lavezariis, like most of his contemporaries, expected the Coronado Expedition, and Gallego with it, to reach cities of Cathay, where silks, porcelains, and spices could be found at favorable prices.

In addition, to insure the success of the enterprise, Lavezariis stood surety for many expeditionaries in the purchase of equipment and supplies and expected to be reimbursed at the conclusion of the entrada. With the high expectations of Cíbola that buoyed many people in New Spain in 1539, his role seemed to entail only a modest financial risk. What was found in Tierra Nueva to the north, however, was so inferior to what members of the expedition had been led to expect that most of them returned south in 1542 heavily in debt and with no means of repaying loans from Lavezariis or anyone else. Rather than resplendent Oriental cities brimming with high-value exotic goods, the expeditionaries had encountered stone and adobe pueblos of the Middle Río Grande Valley and even less satisfactory nomadic peoples of the neighboring plains. In Tierra Nueva expeditionaries saw abundant crops, cotton cloth, robes of bison hide and turkey feathers, and strings of shell and turquoise beads, but these items did not promise lives of wealth and ease. Nor were the regions’ Native peoples generally pleased by the foreign intrusion; any worthwhile gain for the expeditionaries would have entailed a protracted, violent, and uncertain struggle. Thus, the expeditionaries returned empty-handed to the south after little more than two years.<sup>13</sup>

Time did little to ease the dismal financial situation for many of the expeditionaries. Even some of the well-to-do members of the expedition

extinguished their debts only after many years. More than a decade after the loans were made, Lavezariis “had not been repaid for much of what he had loaned.” Both Tovar and Vázquez de Coronado, for example, still owed money to Lavezariis in 1550.<sup>14</sup> One might expect, therefore, that at the frustrated end of the Coronado Expedition in fall 1542, Lavezariis would have been strapped for cash and wary of investment in similar undertakings. Instead, Lavezariis was spending liberally to outfit and underwrite a new venture, an attempt to cross the Mar del Sur (Pacific Ocean) and establish a Spanish foothold in the Islas del Poniente (Philippines). This new mission, the Villalobos Expedition, was led by Ruy López de Villalobos, nephew of Viceroy Mendoza. Lavezariis later said that he spent in this undertaking “more than 4,000 ducados [about 6,000 pesos] . . . in provisions and accoutrements . . . and in assistance to individual persons.”<sup>15</sup>

Some of those whom Lavezariis likely helped with money and supplies had just returned from the Coronado Expedition. They included don Alonso Manrique, Juan Pérez, Martín Sánchez, Diego Sánchez de Cíbola, Pero González, Francisco de Simancas, Juan Gómez, Pedro Martín de la Bermeja, Hernán Pérez, Juan de Morales, and Pedro de Ramos.<sup>16</sup> Given their sad financial state in fall 1542, Lavezariis urged a contingent of recent Tierra Nueva expeditionaries to embark, without a break of more than a month or two, on this fresh enterprise. These veterans took with them what they had learned in Cíbola, Tiguex, and Quivira. On the whole, they may have been less optimistic of success than they had been three years earlier. Some bore physical wounds from their encounters with Pueblos and other North American Natives. Undoubtedly, many were bitter over the failed venture into Tierra Nueva. Some may have been pressured into joining the ocean voyage in order to extricate themselves from indebtedness. Others simply had nothing else ahead of them or followed the crowd to the next gamble.

This time, on the Villalobos Expedition, Lavezariis went along, rather than simply sending a criado. The mission was to cross the Pacific Ocean to the Philippine Islands and take control of them in the name of Carlos I of Spain. Mendoza appointed Lavezariis to be contador and serve as one of the king’s watchdogs on the expedition. Late in October 1542, Lavezariis, the recruits fresh from Cíbola, and hundreds of others departed from the port of La Navidad, in the province of Colima, Mexico. They sailed in four *navíos* (large ships), a *galeota*, a *galera*, and a *fusta* (three smaller lateen-rigged, oared vessels).<sup>17</sup> They totaled “396 Spaniards” and “400 Blacks and Indian servants, both men and women.” The ships carried an inventory very similar to that of the Coronado Expedition, including arquebuses, crossbows, and trade and gift items consisting of colored fabrics of various kinds, mirrors,

knives, scissors, rumbler bells, glass beads, and small, glazed earthenware bowls.<sup>18</sup> Lavezariis probably purchased some of this stock.

Our understanding of the significance of Lavezariis's role in the Villalobos voyage, which lasted seven years, shifts with the various reporters of the events. In Lavezariis's own account, he is a central figure and his contributions to the voyage stand out, as does his service to the viceroy and the king. Other reporters have a different focus and rarely mention the contador. Given the very high mortality rate among those who embarked on the voyage, it is likely that Lavezariis was, as he later wrote, "many times on the brink of death."<sup>19</sup> Of the nearly 400 men-at-arms who departed from La Navidad in 1542, only 144 survived to reach Lisbon, Portugal, in August 1548.<sup>20</sup> Most deaths were from injury in battle, which was frequent once the expedition reached the islands between the Moluccas and the Philippines. Fifty-six men-at-arms, for example, died in a single ambush on the island of Mindanao in late April 1543.<sup>21</sup> The Villalobos mission, plagued by constant violence, closely resembled other enterprises of reconnaissance and conquest in the sixteenth century. Disease and shipwreck also contributed to the death toll.

While surviving in the hostile environment of the far western Pacific islands, Lavezariis provided Villalobos with funds to purchase foodstuff, which was repeatedly in short supply. Presumably, Lavezariis, as a merchant-banker, had on hand a large sum of cash and intended to purchase Oriental goods for resale in Spain and New Spain. He offered that bankroll, or a portion of it, to Captain General Villalobos during the expedition's extremity of hunger.

Evidence suggests that Lavezariis's principal mission on the voyage was to open trade with China and the islands of Southeast Asia. In this effort he was successful, although not immediately. A feasible sailing route from the Philippines needed to be determined in order to establish trade in high-value Asian goods with Spain by way of New Spain. The westward trip from New Spain was relatively easy, aided as it was by the westward-blowing North Equatorial Trade Winds. But the return was blocked, in a wide band on either side of the equator, by those same prevailing air currents. Two attempts were made by members of the Villalobos Expedition to sail from Mindanao in the Philippines to New Spain, the first between May 1543 and October 1544, and the second during spring and early summer 1545.<sup>22</sup> Both times the mission was launched in the *nao* (ship) *San Juan de Letrán*. Lavezariis appears not to have been aboard during either attempt. Neither voyage was successful.

In fact a roundtrip route between New Spain and the East Indies was not successfully navigated for another seventeen years. When it finally was, however, it followed in part one of the routes Lavezariis outlined in the *derroteros* (pilots' logs) he managed to carry around the world. Lavezariis, according

to his own account, was instrumental in delineating the route by which the first successful roundtrip would later be made. When he finally returned to New Spain in 1549, by way of India, Africa, and Spain, the *derroteros* he kept contained all “the western islands, the islands of Japan and Lequios, and the coast of China,” and also the outbound course and partial return route from the Philippines to New Spain.<sup>23</sup> He may have sent agents of his own on the two attempted return voyages mentioned earlier and must have copied the original logs and interviewed the pilots. Thus, Lavezariis’s claim that his work was key to the eventual establishment of the Manila Galleon trade was apparently accurate.<sup>24</sup>

In keeping with the entrepreneurial drive of a merchant-banker, Lavezariis also acquired goods during the Villalobos voyage. He managed incredibly to bring back “samples and information” that would be useful and marketable in Spain and New Spain. He returned, for example, with an improved cotton ginning device (*torno*) which, by his own estimate, could produce “ten times as much” clean cotton as other methods. Somehow he also brought a wooden shipboard water reservoir back. The shipboard water reservoir, unlike the traditional ceramic amphoras (*pipas*), promised a safer way to carry a large quantity of water. And he carried with him examples of trade items in common currency in eastern Asia and the Pacific islands.<sup>25</sup> Among those trade items were the first ginger roots to be imported into the Americas. They thrived and multiplied to become a commercial crop on several of the West Indian islands.<sup>26</sup> Lavezariis even transported from the East Indies a quantity of tar that was especially good for caulking ships’ planking. Furthermore, he stowed a special kind of shipboard oven (*horno de tabazón*). And he transported human cargo; several slaves were to be trained as interpreters and would eventually facilitate communication and trade. All of this was accomplished “at great cost and risk to his person.”<sup>27</sup>

Lavezariis’s commercial activities on the dangerous islands of the western Pacific reveal an aspect of the Villalobos Expedition that was usually overlooked, even by the expeditionaries themselves. Some members were evidently not occupied in the process of “pacification” of local populations and procurement of food and other supplies necessary for simple survival. Instead, they engaged in commercial scouting. Lavezariis, along with retainers, servants, and other assistants, shuttled between islands, talked with traders, bought sample goods, and arranged for their packing and stowing aboard the expedition’s most seaworthy vessels. Surely these mercantile labors expressed a dogged and all but irrepressible optimism, even while other members of the expedition were being killed and wounded in battle and dying of starvation and disease. Perhaps the Villalobos group as a whole recognized that



Lavezariis's activities, and those of other unknown entrepreneurs, were the *raison d'être* for the entire enterprise. Everyone's future prosperity hinged upon such scouting.

Lavezariis and other survivors of the voyage barely touched land in Portugal after their seven-year ordeal before re-embarking for New Spain. He reached Mexico City in 1549.<sup>28</sup> No sooner had he reported on the Villalobos voyage to the viceroy than Mendoza directed him to return to Spain to deliver this same information to the king's council.<sup>29</sup> So he sailed from Veracruz, Mexico, for Sevilla, where he evidently reported to the Casa de la Contratación (Board of Trade) and the Consejo de Indias (Council of the Indies), and visited family.

Once again he did not dally, but turned around, by order of the king, according to his own telling, and sailed for New Spain. In 1550 he reached New Spain and then married Inés Alvarez de Gibraleón, the widow of a man named Francisco Rodríguez, a *vecino* of Mexico City who was a "first conqueror" of New Spain, by virtue of having fought in the siege of Tenochtitlan. It is possible, even likely, though we cannot yet prove it, that this Francisco Rodríguez was also a member of the Coronado Expedition.<sup>30</sup> In that event, Lavezariis may have loaned him money or goods to make that trip. Rodríguez died in 1545, leaving Inés with a young son, many debts, and four small *encomiendas* in Zacatula.<sup>31</sup> We do not yet know the location or circumstances of his death.<sup>32</sup>

Before he died, Rodríguez renounced his *encomiendas* in favor of his young son Pedro Sánchez.<sup>33</sup> But when Pedro soon died at age eight, the Audiencia de México (the high court) assumed royal administration of the *encomiendas* in place of Inés. By 1549 she had initiated a suit seeking return of her former husband's *encomiendas*. In 1550 Lavezariis, her new spouse, joined the suit, urging that both his wife and he deserved the income from the Indian tribute that Rodríguez had received. A number of former members of the Coronado Expedition, including don Alonso Manrique, Rodrigo de Frías, and Vázquez de Coronado, supported the suit by testifying as witnesses for the couple. The case was still pending in 1559.<sup>34</sup>

By that time, Lavezariis was being called on regularly by Viceroy Luis de Velasco, who had succeeded Mendoza in 1550, to perform important tasks related to navigation and trade. Unlike the Coronado Expedition and the Villalobos voyage, the projects Lavezariis was now engaged in were initiated from the royal court in Spain. For one thing, the king's counselors were now determined to establish a Spanish political, ecclesiastical, and mercantile presence in the Philippines, which would challenge the Portuguese monopoly on trade with the Orient. Under the terms of the Treaty of Zaragoza of 1529, the monarchs of Spain and Portugal had agreed on a demarcation line between their territories of influence and control in the Pacific. That boundary

mirrored the better known Tordesillas Treaty line in the Atlantic. According to the treaty, Spain was allowed free access to the Pacific islands excluding those closest to the Asian mainland, and Spanish ships were not permitted to travel to those islands except by crossing the Pacific from the Americas.<sup>35</sup>

Therefore, the Consejo de Indias set about to provide for two elements that were necessary before regular Spanish commerce with the Orient could begin. The first was ocean-going ships on New Spain's Pacific coast. The second was delineation of a practical roundtrip sailing route across the Mar del Sur. Late in 1557, Viceroy Velasco received a *real provisión*, or royal directive, charging him to make preparations for a reconnaissance of the Pacific islands.<sup>36</sup> In December of that same year, Velasco tapped Lavezariis and former Coronado expeditionary Hernando Botello to take charge of the construction and outfitting of the required vessels at the shipyards at the port of La Navidad on the coast of what is now the Mexican state of Colima.<sup>37</sup> Many difficulties, including outbreaks of disease and flight of Indian laborers, delayed construction.<sup>38</sup>

Then, in 1558, the viceroy pulled Lavezariis from that job to sail "with some pilots, mariners, and other seamen to reconnoiter the ports and bays that exist along the coast of La Florida." Lavezariis undertook this voyage as an advance scout for an expedition that would be sent to settle "La Florida and Santa Elena Point," in what is now South Carolina.<sup>39</sup> Lavezariis's typically detailed report of that reconnaissance recorded the types of trees, the fisheries, the springs and rivers, and other natural features that he had seen. From the coves and inlets along the northern Gulf of Mexico coast, he singled out the Bahía Filipina, what we now know as Mobile Bay, as the "best and most spacious" bay on the coast of La Florida. He recommended it for the site of the planned settlement. His oral report, evidently read from a written original, describes Bahía Filipina:

The mouth of [the bay] is at a latitude of 29.5 degrees. . . . An entrance is formed between the point of an island that is seven leagues long and runs east to west and on the other shore is a point of the mainland. It is half a league from the one side to the other. From the entrance to as far as they [Lavezariis and his men] went . . . it is a total of 15 leagues long and 4 leagues wide and the bottom is good and smooth. . . . In this bay and its environs there are many fishing grounds and shellfish, too. . . . [T]here are many stands of pine of the sort that is [readily] worked and also the sort that makes masts and lateen yards. There are oaks with sweet acorns and ones with bitter acorns, hazelnuts, cedars, junipers, laurels, and small trees that yield a fruit like chestnuts.

. . . There are high red cliffs on the east side [of the bay], from which bricks can be made, and near them is stone for construction. On the western shore there are yellow and gray clays for making pottery. . . . There are many birds, eagles, geese, ducks, partridges, and turtledoves. And [there are] deer in great numbers. . . . Indians were seen, and large canoes . . . and fishing weirs, and in their shelters there were corn, beans, and pumpkins.<sup>40</sup>

In the actual event, don Tristán de Luna y Arellano, leader of the enterprise and a former captain on the Coronado Expedition, chose the Puerto de Ochuse (Pensacola Bay) instead of Bahía Filipina for his colony. The results were disastrous. A hurricane struck the port five days after the prospective colonists landed there. The storm destroyed much of the expedition's stock of food and other supplies. The group, which included a number of the Coronado Expedition's former members, among them Alonso Pérez and Juan Jaramillo, struggled for almost two years with hunger and without support from local Natives.<sup>41</sup>

Lavezariis did not return to La Florida. He went back to building and equipping ships at La Navidad. In June 1560, Juan Pablo de Carrión replaced Botello as manager of the shipyard. Lavezariis, as a salaried royal official, the *alcalde mayor* of Tuxpan and Zapotlán, was probably instrumental in persuading the Indian community of Tuxpan to supply labor to the port, an arrangement that evidently eased a labor shortage. Sickness, however, continued, and a strong earthquake struck La Navidad in May 1563, collapsing most of the buildings including the *casa real* (royal warehouse) where Lavezariis had been storing most of the supplies stockpiled for the upcoming voyage.<sup>42</sup> But Lavezariis was undeterred; he brought another shipload of stores and munitions from Tehuantepeque, Mexico, to La Navidad later in the year. In November 1563, he transported masts for the new ships.<sup>43</sup>

A year later, the five ships were launched, manned by more than four hundred persons. Lavezariis was among the expeditionaries, holding the appointment as royal treasurer. Miguel López de Legazpi and Andrés de Urdaneta, the two leaders of the enterprise, welcomed Lavezariis's knowledge of the western islands. Urdaneta, an Augustinian friar and the expedition's chief pilot, had also been to the Orient between 1525 and 1536 as a teenaged member of the Segunda Armada de Molucca under Francisco García Jofre de Loaysa. They departed from La Navidad in November 1564. Late the following April, the fleet reached Cebu in the central Philippines, which, after some fighting with the local population, was transformed into the Spanish capital of the islands.<sup>44</sup>

The royal instructions to Legazpi and Urdaneta, which governed the voyage, stated that the expeditionaries were supposed to initiate trade with China and the so-called Spice Islands. Furthermore, the instructions specified, "Everything that may be traded or purchased is to be purchased or traded by authority of the royal officials [the treasurer (Lavezariis), the contador (Andrés de la Rochela), and the *factor/veedor* (Andrés Mirandola)]." And they were to keep account of all such transactions.<sup>45</sup> Lavezariis, as treasurer, the first among equals of the officials, was responsible for collecting taxes and other income due the king and paying salaries and other disbursements from the royal funds.<sup>46</sup> Thus, Lavezariis controlled the trade.

The first order of business was to acquire a shipment of spices for transport back to New Spain, as the viceroy had ordered. As it developed, cinnamon was the only easily marketable spice native to the Philippines. So, a cargo of that bark was assembled and one of the fleet's five ships, the *San Pablo*, was cleaned, repaired, and made ready for the return trip. After little over a month in the islands, the ship sailed with Urdaneta as pilot, heading north and then east. The *San Pablo* started along the route first attempted by the *San Juan de Letrán* of the Villalobos Expedition twenty years before. For the first several hundred miles the *San Pablo* followed the course Lavezariis had spelled out in his report of 1550. Then, catching the persistent westerlies between 30 and 40 degrees north latitude, Urdaneta guided the ship for nearly three months without sighting even a single island. On 1 October 1565, the single ship sailed into La Navidad after crossing the north Pacific. The route followed was to be used almost without adjustment for the next 250 years. The Spanish Philippines trade had begun.<sup>47</sup>

For the first years, "the Spaniards displayed considerable activity in investigating the trading possibilities of the archipelago, but with disappointing results."<sup>48</sup> Naturally, most members of the Legazpi Expedition spent their time surviving the elements and wresting control of portions of the Philippines from Native residents. This process required a mix of warfare and negotiation. Many Filipinos and Europeans died as a result of these hostilities. As Lavezariis wrote in 1573, for the first eight years of the colony, migration of Europeans to the islands, an estimated seven hundred persons, only replaced those who had died.<sup>49</sup>

Things changed, however, when Legazpi died in 1572. Among the deceased governor's possessions was a locked box, which contained a sealed document. The document spelled out the order of succession to the governorship in the event of Legazpi's demise. First on the list was Mateo de Saz, who had previously died; second was Lavezariis. He became interim governor. As Lavezariis told the story, after Legazpi's death he moved the

bulk of the colonists to the newly founded settlement of Manila on the northern island of Luzon, which, as Lavezariis evidently knew, was much better situated to lure trade from China. The move from Cebu to Manila cut the distance of Spanish traders to China approximately in half. Lavezariis wrote, “The continent is [now] very close, less than 200 leagues [about 520 miles].”<sup>50</sup> Equally important Manila was adjacent to the customary trade routes through the South China Sea plied by fleets of junks. And its bay was, and still is, considered to be the best in the Far East for accommodating and sheltering ships.

Lavezariis described the situation at the new capital in a letter to the viceroy in these very optimistic terms: “Chinese ships come to trade at many ports on this island . . . In the two years that we have been on this island [the number of] ships has been increasing, with more ships each year . . . They say they will bring as much silk as we want . . . If merchants from New Spain were to come here, they would grow wealthy and increase the royal sales tax [*almojarifazgo*].”<sup>51</sup> Chinese traffic at Manila increased rapidly from only six junks in 1574 to twelve or fifteen the following year.<sup>52</sup> As Lavezariis had anticipated, the move to Manila, combined with active recruitment of Chinese traders by him and others, firmly established a lucrative trade in silks and porcelains that lasted more than two hundred years. Finally, the dream of Columbus—direct Spanish trade with the Far East in high-value goods, without intermediaries—had been realized. A flow of silver from New Spain to the Orient in exchange for luxury goods, including fabrics, high-fired ceramics, and a multitude of spices, enriched generations of traders and fed the appetites of the Spanish Empire.

Governor Lavezariis continued his efforts to expand trade. For example he sent an embassy to China in 1575 to establish a Spanish foothold on the Chinese mainland. The overture was rejected.<sup>53</sup> Lavezariis feared, even as he wrote to the viceroy about the emerging bonanza, that the play of Spanish politics would push him aside and that he would be replaced as governor. Other men in New Spain were seeking the governorship and disparaging Lavezariis’s abilities.<sup>54</sup> And indeed those efforts prevailed. By the time his embassy returned from China later in 1575, doctor Francisco de Sande had replaced Lavezariis as governor. In 1578 Lavezariis published an account of his activities in La Florida and the Philippines. He died in 1580 in Manila, where he was still a local official.<sup>55</sup> He was survived by his wife, now known as “doña” Inés Alvarez de Gibraleón. She was taken before the Inquisition in Manila on charges of being a witch in 1580. Her principal infraction seems to have been cutting the head off a chicken. She was absolved of the charges, and with that disappeared from our view.<sup>56</sup>

## Significance of the Memorial of Guido de Lavezariis

Since November 2007, when we first became aware of the “Memorial de Guido de Labazares,” we have been following the various documentary leads linking Lavezariis and his Coronado Expedition associates with what was then the expanding empire of Spain. The resulting daisy chain of documents has opened new vistas on sixteenth-century enterprises of conquest and reconnaissance and the people who undertook them.

First and most obviously, Lavezariis’s recent emergence from historical obscurity, as far as the American Southwest and northwest Mexico are concerned, confirms the crucial role of nonparticipant investors in the Coronado Expedition and similar enterprises. Lavezariis’s business is an example of a small- to medium-sized merchant bank investing in enterprises of conquest and reconnaissance. Given the size of Lavezariis’s investment, in the twenty thousand peso range, he was operating far below the level of the great banks of the day, the German firms of the Fuggers and Welsers. Those large banks underwrote entire expeditions, even recruiting and hiring their own personnel. Smaller financial entities, like that of Lavezariis, however, allowed many individual conquistadors to participate in “publicly” funded undertakings, such as the Coronado Expedition. Without Lavezariis’s loans or similar advances of hundreds and even thousands of pesos, captains like don Pedro de Tovar would have been poorly equipped. Other expeditionaries would have been barred from participation altogether.

The Lavezariis documents also reveal the linkages among expeditionary events throughout the Spanish Empire. Those connections were made possible by the extraordinary worldwide mobility of people from many cultures during the sixteenth century. People traveled thousands of miles with relative ease and nonchalance in surprising numbers and with surprising frequency. For example during a span of less than thirty years, Lavezariis traveled from Spain to the Americas, circumnavigated the globe with Mexico City as his starting and end point, reconnoitered the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico, and made at least two more crossings of the Atlantic Ocean and one more of the Pacific. He was not a mere tourist, but rather an actor in many locales around the world.

Nor was Lavezariis alone. The breadth of his experience was certainly above average for Spaniards of his day. But many others, including a fair share of those who participated in the Coronado Expedition, traveled extensively and carried their experiences of Cíbola, Tiguex, and Quivira to far-flung places. To begin with, former Coronado expeditionaries joined Lavezariis on the Villalobos voyage to the Philippines in the 1540s. Some went to La

Florida in the late 1550s, following Lavezariis's scouting trip. Yet others pursued their careers in Peru and Guatemala. Some returned to their original homes in Spain, while a majority settled in various towns in New Spain, from Culiacán to Oaxaca, from Puebla de los Angeles to Colima, and from Guadalajara to Mexico City. Many relocated more than once, traveling and moving belongings with seeming ease over long distances.

This movement diffused knowledge, opinions, judgments, and attitudes, gained in the course of the sojourn in Tierra Nueva, across much of the Spanish world. Veterans' reactions and behavior toward Zapotecs, Quechuas, or Tagalogs were conditioned by their experiences with Tiwas, Teyas, Hopis, Opatas, and Quivirans while on the Coronado Expedition. If, as seems to have been the case, suspicion and mistrust of Native people of Tierra Nueva was the norm for Coronado expeditionaries, then Spaniards likely transferred these attitudes to Natives wherever they went thereafter.

The transience of former Coronado expeditionaries and a corresponding general fluidity of early Spanish colonial populations helped reinforce and perpetuate the broad similarity of Spanish actions throughout the world in the sixteenth century. Patterns that originated in Spain were confirmed or refined in Tierra Nueva and blended with similarly revised practices from other regions. Except for the added complication of sea travel, the confrontations between the Villalobos expeditionaries and the Native people of Mindanao seem familiar to anyone acquainted with the Coronado entrada. Both expeditions encountered a shortage of supplies, sought a quick recourse to purchase provisions from local Natives, commandeered what the expeditionaries lacked, encountered violent retaliation by Native peoples, and finally engaged in full-fledged conquest.

The Tierra Nueva experience must have confirmed the value of Native allies. Certainly, the two derivative expeditions, those of Villalobos and Tristán de Luna y Arellano, adopted similar procedures. They even used Indians from central Mexico as their auxiliaries, as had the Coronado expeditionaries. Employing Indians represented only a slight modification of a centuries-old Iberian tradition of recruiting recently conquered populations to subjugate their neighbors. Nevertheless, the Tierra Nueva experience recommended certain groups of central Mexican Indian warriors as the most advantageous allies.

Furthermore, the documents related to Lavezariis show that mercantile activities, which were generally not reported in the documentary record, occupied the time and energy of specific expeditionaries, especially the officials and traders dispatched by royal or viceregal mandate.<sup>57</sup> While most members of the Villalobos Expedition were fighting and dying in the western islands,

Lavezariis evidently made contacts and purchased samples of goods wherever he could. He was personally untouched by the fighting, although certainly not unaffected. His job was not direct conquest, but extension of trade. Hints of similar mercantile activities as an adjunct to attempted conquest are also present in the Coronado entrada. Vázquez de Coronado's dispatch of typical Zuni trade items to the viceroy in Mexico City is an analog of Lavezariis's later acquisition of goods in the Far East.

Trade is one of the many expeditionary activities that is obscured by most expedition narratives, which mainly focus on taking political control of Native peoples. The expeditionaries' observations of Native peoples and places seem also to have escaped record in participant narratives of the Coronado Expedition. Viceroy Mendoza sent two painters on the Coronado Expedition "to paint the things of the land."<sup>58</sup> Yet their artistic endeavors, even their very presence on the expedition, are not recorded in any of the surviving narratives. Also, there were evidently persons on the expedition whose job was to record at least rudimentary geographical data, analogous to the rich records Lavezariis made of his reconnaissance of the Gulf Coast and that he assiduously preserved from the Villalobos voyage. Since only a tiny minority of the expeditionaries engaged in such activities, which may have been viewed as frivolous by some of their companions, these endeavors have gone unrecorded and therefore can only be guessed at by historians.

Similar to the small and medium investors who funded the expedition, the efforts of licensed traders, artists, and cartographers escaped broad notice and record in part because they did their work away from the fray of conquest and the hubbub of keeping the expedition alive and functioning. Presumably, this lack of information is why until now, we have had no inkling of the existence and role of Guido de Lavezariis. Lavezariis, although he may have enjoyed unusual success, represents a whole segment of expeditionary support and activity that was broadly typical of the sixteenth-century Spanish enterprise of conquest. His personal story links Tiguex with Manila, Cíbola with La Florida, and Quivira with China. His life is emblematic of the general, unplanned integration of the Spanish Indies.

## Notes

1. Shirley Cushing Flint, "The Financing and Provisioning of the Coronado Expedition," in *The Coronado Expedition from the Distance of 460 Years*, ed. Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 42–56. In addition to funding by major investors, almost all individual men-at-arms had to underwrite their own participation. It has been estimated that rank-and-file members of the expedition spent an average of at least one thousand pesos each.



2. Guido's surname is spelled several different ways in the documentary record since Spanish scribes tried to record a name that was foreign to them. Those variants include Lavezariis (which we use throughout this article), Lavezares, Labazares, and Lavezaris. His signature reads "Lavezariis." See Carta de Guido de Lavezares, 1573, Archivo General de Indias [hereafter AGI], Filipinas, 29, N. 13, Sevilla, Spain.
3. Marciano R. de Borja, *Basques in the Philippines*, The Basque Series (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2005), 32. Although Thomas Hillerkuss provisionally accepts a Basque origin for Guido, he explains for another individual of the same surname, "Lavezares es corrupción de Lavezzari, familia de origen genovés." Thomas Hillerkuss, *Diccionario Biográfico del Occidente Novohispano, Siglo XVI*, vol. 4 (Zacatecas, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, 2009), s.v. "Lavezaris, Guido de."
4. A Genoese man who appears to be Lavezariis's grandfather or uncle, also named Guido de Labazaris, was present as a merchant and bookseller in Sevilla, Spain, in 1495 and 1496. José Bono and Carmen Ungueti-Bono, *Los protocolos sevillanos de la época del descubrimiento* (Sevilla, Spain: Colegio Notarial de Sevilla, 1986), 91, 94. For information on Lavezariis's voyage to New Spain, see Carta de Labazares al Rey, Manila, July 1573, AGI, Filipinas, 29, N. 13. Lavezariis's travel to the New World had apparently been planned for several years before he actually made the trip. In 1531, for instance, he received permission to take two black slaves with him when he went to the Indies. Real cédula a Guido de Labazares, 11 March 1531, AGI, Indiferente, 422, L. 15, fol. 18r.
5. The Pánfilo Narváez Expedition survivors' earliest formal report, commonly known as the "Joint Report," was made to Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza during the summer or fall of 1536. For an English translation of the version of the "Joint Report" recorded by sixteenth-century historian Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, see Basil C. Hedrick and Carroll L. Riley, *The Journey of the Vaca Party: The Account of the Narváez Expedition, 1528–1536, as Related by Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés*, University Museum Studies, no. 2 (Carbondale: University Museum, Southern Illinois University, 1974).
6. Luis de Lavezaris, 4 July 1536, AGI, Pasajeros a Indias, 2, E. 2781; and Informes de los conquistadores y pobladores de México y otros lugares en Nueva España, ca. 1550, AGI, México, 1064, L. 1.
7. Hillerkuss, *Diccionario Biográfico*, 4:s.v. "Lavezaris, Guido de"; and Información de Guido de Lavezariis in El fiscal contra Guido de Labazares y su esposa Inés Álvarez de Gibrleón, viuda de Francisco Rodríguez, vecinos de México, sobre el derecho a las encomiendas de Yetecomac y Taimeo, 1551–1560, AGI, Justicia, 202, N. 1, R. 1, pieza 3.
8. Historian Ruth Pike writes, "Explorers and conquerors looked to the Genoese [bankers] for personal loans. Among the better-known figures who received funds from the Genoese at various times were Hernando de Soto, Ponce de León, Martín Fernández de Enciso, and Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo. As for the lesser adventurers—soldiers who took part in the conquests, early settlers, and royal functionaries—who obtained financial aid from the Genoese, the list is so long that it defies presentation here." Ruth Pike, *Enterprise and Adventure: The Genoese in Seville and the Opening of the New World* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966), 102, 117–26, 192 n. 1.
9. Francisco A. de Icaza, *Conquistadores y pobladores de Nueva España: diccionario autobiográfico sacado de los textos originales*, 2 vols. (Madrid: [Imprenta de "El Adelantado de Segovia"], 1923), 2:1156. An encomienda was the royal grant of the right to collect

- tribute, labor, or both from an indigenous community, usually made by the king as a reward for service.
10. Información de Guido de Lavezariis, AGI, Justicia, 202, N. 1, R. 1, pieza 3. *Gineta* saddles are light, Arab-style saddles with short stirrups for riding with the knees radically bent. A *castellano* is a monetary unit equivalent to the *peso de oro*.
  11. *Ibid.*
  12. "Mustert Roll of the Expedition, Compostela, February 22, 1540," in *Documents of the Coronado Expedition, 1539–1542: "They Were Not Familiar with His Majesty, nor Did They Wish to Be His Subjects,"* ed. and trans. Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint (Dallas, Tex.: Southern Methodist University Press, 2005), 148, 160.
  13. The members of the expedition judged that Tierra Nueva offered nothing of value. There were many instances of impoverishment and indebtedness among the expeditionaries when they returned south in 1542. For some examples, see Richard Flint, *No Settlement, No Conquest: A History of the Coronado Entrada* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 196–99.
  14. Información de Guido de Lavezariis, AGI, Justicia, 202, N. 1, R. 1, pieza 3.
  15. *Ibid.*
  16. Perhaps Diego Sánchez adopted the "de Cíbola" toponymic annex to his surname to distinguish himself from another man of the same name, or it may have been a proud flourish. In either case, this was not an unusual Spanish practice at the time. The list of survivors from the Villalobos Expedition includes an unnamed Benavente and an unnamed Torres who were also possibly veterans of the Coronado Expedition. Memoria de los Castellanos que son vivos, Lisboa, 1 August 1548, AGI, Patronato, 23, R. 10, fols. 18v–19r. Approximately 396 men started the Villalobos voyage. If the former Coronado expeditionaries survived the voyage at about the same rate as the other men, the total number of veterans of the Coronado Expedition who embarked with Ruy López de Villalobos was probably 30 or more. Información de Guido de Lavezariis, AGI, Justicia, 202, N. 1, R. 1, pieza 3; and Consuelo Varela, ed., *El viaje de don Ruy López de Villalobos a las islas del poniente, 1542–1548* (Milano: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino La Goliardica, 1983), 19, 29.
  17. These vessels all appear to be from the fleet of nine to thirteen craft that Pedro de Alvarado had constructed and contributed to a company he formed with Viceroy Mendoza in 1540. "Formation of a Company between Mendoza and Pedro de Alvarado, Tiripitío, November 29, 1540," in *Documents of the Coronado Expedition*, Flint and Flint, 271–84. See also Harry Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo* (1986; repr., San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1998), 75–77.
  18. Varela, *El viaje*, 38–39.
  19. Información de Guido de Lavezariis, AGI, Justicia, 202, N. 1, R. 1, pieza 3.
  20. Memoria de los Castellanos que son vivos, AGI, Patronato, 23, R. 10, fols. 18v–19r.
  21. Varela, *El viaje*, 88–89.
  22. *Ibid.*, 132–45.
  23. Carta de Labazares al Rey, AGI, Filipinas, 29, N. 13.
  24. In his classic book on the Manila trade, historian William L. Schurz wrote, "[M]uch useful information had been gained, particularly on the voyages of the *Trinidad* [Magellan] and the *San Juan de Letran* [Villalobos]." Both voyages penetrated into the northern latitudes and came very close to locating the successful return route.

- William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1959), 218.
25. Información de Guido de Lavezariis, AGI, Justicia, 202, N. 1, R. 1, pieza 3.
  26. Carta de Guido de Lavezaris dando cuenta de sus servicios, 1573, AGI, Filipinas, 6, R. 2, N. 15.
  27. Información de Guido de Lavezariis, AGI, Justicia, 202, N. 1, R. 1, pieza 3.
  28. “Sin se detener ny ocupar en otra cosa sino en seguimiento de la dicha jornada.” *Ibid.*
  29. Carta de Guido de Lavezaris, AGI, Filipinas, 6, R. 2, N. 15.
  30. Highly suggestive of Francisco Rodríguez’s participation in the Coronado Expedition is that, during the lawsuit to recover encomiendas, the witnesses for Inés Alvarez de Gibrleón were former expeditionaries Domingo Martín, Pedro Hernández de Albornoz, Francisco de Vargas, and Francisco Gómez. Información de Guido de Lavezariis, AGI, Justicia, 202, N. 1, R. 1, pieza 3.
  31. The pueblos, all in the *provincia* of Zacatula, were Petatán, Xalxocoticlán, Ystecomal, and Taymeo. Información de Guido de Lavezariis, AGI, Justicia, 202, N. 1, R. 1, pieza 3.
  32. It is tempting to imagine that, in debt as Rodríguez was after the Coronado Expedition, he joined Lavezariis on the Villalobos voyage and died in the Philippines. But this is little more than conjecture.
  33. Why Pedro had the surname Sánchez is unclear. The practice of children bearing surnames different from those of both their parents was common in sixteenth-century Spain.
  34. Información de Guido de Lavezariis, AGI, Justicia, 202, N. 1, R. 1, pieza 3.
  35. Tratado de Zaragoza, April 1529, AGI, Patronato, 49, R. 9.
  36. Luis Muro, *La expedición Legazpi-Urdaneta a las Filipinas, 1557–1564* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1975), 132–35.
  37. Lavezariis claimed that from as early as 1549 or 1550, he was under orders from the king to begin construction of ships for a return to the Orient. Carta de Labazares al Rey, AGI, Filipinas, 6, R. 2, N. 15.
  38. Muro, *La expedición Legazpi-Urdaneta*, 31–34.
  39. Declaración de Guido de Labazares y otros pilotos, México, 1559, AGI, Patronato, 19, R. 8.
  40. *Ibid.* The latitude measurement given by Lavezariis is surprisingly accurate for the time. According to modern calculations, the mouth of Mobile Bay lies at about 30 degrees north. Lavezariis refers to one of the two water passages into Mobile Bay from the Gulf of Mexico. It is the one traversed by the modern Intercoastal Waterway between east–west running Dauphin Island (which is about 14.5 miles, or roughly 6 *leguas legales*, long) and Cedar Point. (The *legua legal* of Burgos was the geographical measure of distance most commonly used by Spaniards in the Americas during the middle part of the sixteenth century. It is equivalent to about 2.63 miles.) The passage is about 1.9 miles wide, rather than 1.3 as stated by Lavezariis. The dimensions of the bay, as recorded by Lavezariis, are 15 leagues (40 miles), north to south, by 4 leagues (11 miles), east to west. The modern figures are 32 miles by 11.5 miles at Mullet Point. The original report is in Spanish and we have provided the English translation.

41. Alonso Pérez was the *contador* on the expedition to La Florida. The Florida Expedition included, for example, men named Bermúdez and Gutiérrez, whose given names are not known, as well as a Francisco Rodríguez, clearly not Inés Álvarez's husband.
42. Muro, *La expedición Legazpi-Urdaneta*, 53.
43. Mandamiento, November 1563, Archivo General de la Nación [hereafter AGN], Mercedes, 7, fols. 158r–159v, Mexico City, Mexico; and Carta de Luis de Velasco a Juan de la Isla, November 1563, AGI, Patronato, 52, R. 4.
44. Samuel Eliot Morison, *The European Discovery of America*, vol. 2, *The Southern Voyages, 1492–1616* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 474–95; and Schurz, *Manila Galleon*, 20–25.
45. *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de ultramar*, Segunda Serie, Tomo 2, De las islas Filipinas (Madrid, Spain: Real Academia de la Historia, 1886), 180–81. For the names of the officials, see *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento*, 2:365, 375.
46. For a full description of the duties of treasurer, in this case the treasurer of the Hernando de Soto Expedition to La Florida, see Asientos de armada, 1527–1621, AGI, Contratación, 3309.
47. Morison, *European Discovery of America*, 2:494–95.
48. Schurz, *Manila Galleon*, 23.
49. Carta de Guido de Lavezaris, AGI, Filipinas, 6, R. 2, N. 15.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*
52. Schurz, *Manila Galleon*, 27.
53. *Ibid.*, 68.
54. Carta de Labazares al Rey, AGI, Filipinas, 29, N. 13. With a certain amount of irony, among those who had sought to assume leadership in the Philippines was Juan de Zaldívar, a former captain on the Coronado Expedition and one of the wealthiest people in New Spain. Before his death in about 1570, Zaldívar had been seeking the position of adelantado of the islands. Proof of service of Juan de Zaldívar, Guadalajara, February 1566, AGI, Patronato, 60, N. 5, R. 4.
55. *Enciclopedia universal ilustrada europeo-americana*, 70 vols. (Barcelona: Hijos de J. Espasa, 1907–1930), 29:s.v. “Labazares [sic.], Guido de.”
56. Case against Inés Álvarez, 1580, AGN, Inquisición, vol. 131, exp. 11.
57. Included among specially detailed traders on the Coronado Expedition was Francisco Pilo, who was supposed to make the second voyage north with Hernando Alarcón in 1541. “The Viceroy’s Instructions to Hernando Alarcón, May 31, 1541,” in *Documents of the Coronado Expedition*, Flint and Flint, 228, 231–32 (fols. 2v–3r).
58. Informes de los conquistadores y pobladores de México, fol. 270r., AGI, México, 1064, L. 111.

