

Church, Crown, and Commerce in Seventeenth-Century Lima: A Synoptic Interpretation

By Fred Bronner

Private enterprise founded the Spanish-American empire, and a near-capitalist spirit pervaded it and held it together. The sixteenth-century conquistadors, like their seventeenth-century successors, claimed to promote the religion of their church whose patron was the king. Yet priests and bureaucrats participated in the private sector. The church-state edifice was bound primarily by ties of family and business.

Saying this much does not contradict the Weberian patrimonial interpretations of colonial Latin America by Mario Góngora, Richard Morse, John L. Phelan, S.N. Eisenstadt¹. However the Weber-Tawney linkage of Protestantism with capitalism – whose well-known debates need not detain us² – has been found unhistorical on Catholic prohibition of usury³. In this respect Spanish America was no different

¹ Mario Góngora, *El estado en el derecho indiano* (Santiago de Chile 1951); Richard M. Morse, "The Heritage of Latin America": Louis Hartz (ed.), *The Founding of New Societies* (New York 1964), pp. 123–177; John L. Phelan, *The Kingdom of Quito in the Seventeenth Century* (Wisconsin 1967); S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires* (New York 1963).

² V.A. Demant, *Religion and the Decline of Capitalism* (London 1952); Herbert Lüthy, "Die 'Ethik des Protestantismus'": H. Lüthy, *In Gegenwart der Geschichte* (Köln, Berlin 1967), pp. 74–91; S.N. Eisenstadt, "Tmura Datit, Shinuy Hevratit u Modernizatsya": *Divrey Ha-Akademya Ha-Leumit Ha-Yisraelit Le-Madaim* 3:6(1968), pp. 83–121; Paul Veyne, *Le Pain et le Cirque* (Paris 1976), pp. 127–137.

³ Raymond de Roover, *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank 1397–1494* (Cambridge 1963); Richard Ehrenberg, *Finance in the Age of the Renaissance* (New York 1963); H.M. Robertson, *Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism* (Cambridge 1935).

from Europe. Thus “Mexico developed early an active system of credit and loans” which the Catholic church tolerated⁴.

This brings up the prior question of the nature of Spanish American religion. Did Spain make Catholicism “vital in remote villages”, or has it left the area “pre-Christian”?⁵ The methods of mission have been questioned; but not its visible success⁶.

However the church did no more supervise the spiritual conquest than did the state direct the physical. The seculars and – more usually – friars rather merged into a varied, privately financed, and fairly plebeian host of conquistadors⁷. Christianization justified the empire and behooved on all governors⁸. But as often as not, the actual evangelizers were lay conquerors and settlers, including Spanish women⁹. Both laymen and clergy shared in the mission and both thought themselves “soldiers of Christ”¹⁰. Though they fought for the

⁴ Victoria H. Cummins, “The Church and Business Practices in Late Sixteenth Century Mexico”: *The Americas* 44:4 (1968), pp. 437, 440.

⁵ Adriaan C. Van Oss, *Catholic Colonialism. A Parish History of Guatemala 1524–1821* (Cambridge 1986), p. XI; Enrique Dussel, *A History of the Church in Latin America. Colonialism to Liberation (1492–1979)* (Grand Rapids 1981), p. 21.

⁶ Peter Dressendörfer, “Hacia una reconsideración del papel del clero en la ‘conquista espiritual de América’”: *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas (JbLA)* 22 (1985), pp. 23–38; Sabine MacCormack, “‘The Heart Has Its Reasons’: Predicaments of Missionary Christianity in Early Colonial Peru”: *Hispanic American Historical Review (HAHR)* 65 (1985), pp. 443–466.

⁷ Pedro Borges, *Análisis del conquistador espiritual de América* (Sevilla 1961), pp. 8–10; Carmen Gómez and Juan Marchena, “Los señores de la guerra en la conquista”, and Fernando Iwasaki Cantú, “Conquistadores o grupos marginales: dinámica social del proceso de conquista”, both in *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 42 (1985), pp. 127–215 and 217–242.

⁸ Woodrow Borah, “El gobernador como administrador civil”: W. Borah (ed.), *El gobierno provincial en la Nueva España 1570–1787* (UNAM 1985), p. 69; Josep M. Barnadas, *Charcas, 1535–1565; orígenes históricos de una sociedad colonial* (La Paz 1973), p. 431; Magnus Mörner, *La corona española y los foráneos en los pueblos de indios de América* (Stockholm 1970), pp. 21, 141.

⁹ James Lockhart, *Spanish Peru 1532–1560. A Colonial Society* (Wisconsin 1968), pp. 51, 52, 163–164; idem, “The Social History of Colonial America: Evolution and Potential”: *Latin American Research Review (LARR)* 7:1 (1972), p. 10; Mörner, *La corona*, pp. 22–24.

¹⁰ Francisco Morales Padrón, *Los conquistadores de América* (Madrid 1974), p. 12; Van Oss, op.cit., p. 23. Examples could be multiplied.

king, these “soldiers” relied on private investment¹¹. Merchants were essential to conquest. And “everybody tried to invest in merchandise”¹².

It will be claimed that soon thereafter lawyers and clerics conquered the conquerors. So think the scholars cited by Josep Barnadas, and so thought the seventeenth-century jurist, Juan de Solórzano Pereira¹³. In fact, under a canopy of overwhelming royal authority and of a bureaucratized church, autonomous sectors wielded real power. They were at once capitalist and Catholic, rational and religious. A steady stream of strivers from Europe kept reinforcing their spirit of enterprise.

The migrants came from cities, founded cities, and lived in them with their descendants¹⁴. They represented the more transient, volatile element in a continuum of stability and mobility within their home communities. Once across the seas, they did not wish to alter the social order, only their own position within it¹⁵.

How then were the Spanish-American cities stratified? Scholars agree on “a light-skinned elite superimposed on a mostly darker-skinned conglomerate of strata”; on an “aristocratic-hidalgo mentality”, and a

¹¹ M. Góngora, *Studies in the Colonial History of Spanish America* (Cambridge 1975), pp. 2–7; José Durand, “El ambiente de la conquista y sus proyecciones en la colonia”: *Historia Mexicana* 3:4, No 12 (1954), pp. 497–499, 511–513; J. Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca* (Austin, London 1972), pp. 67–77; Gómez and Marchena, op.cit., pp. 57–67.

¹² Lockhart, *Spanish Peru*, p. 77; Enrique Otte, “Träger und Formen der wirtschaftlichen Erschließung Lateinamerikas im 16. Jahrhundert”: *JbLA* 4 (1967) pp.240–247; idem, “Mercaderes burgaleses en los inicios del comercio con México”: *Historia Mexicana* 18 (1968), pp. 108–144; Juan Gil, “Marinos y mercaderes en Indias 1499–1504”: *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 42 (1985), pp. 297–499.

¹³ Barnadas, op. cit., p. 133; but see, too, pp. 66–67; Juan de Solórzano y Pereyra, *Política indiana*, 5 vols. (Madrid 1930/1648), vol. 1, p. 120.

¹⁴ Peter Boyd-Bowman, “Patterns of Spanish Emigration to the Indies, 1570–1600”: *HAHR*, 56:4 (1976), pp. 591–592; Richard M. Morse, “The Urban Development of Colonial Latin America”: *Cambridge History of Latin America (CHLA)*, ed. Leslie Bethell, vol. 2 (Cambridge 1984), pp. 78–80. On the high rate of transients, see Mario Góngora, “Urban Stratification in Colonial Chile”: *HAHR*, 55:3 (1975), pp. 441; Carlos Sempat Assadourian, *El sistema de la economía colonial* (Instituto de Estudios Peruanos 1982), p. 67; Ermila Troconis de Veracochea, *Historia de El Tocuyo colonial* (Caracas 1977), p. 55.

¹⁵ Ida Altman, “Emigrants and Society: An Approach to the Background of Colonial Spanish America”: *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Cambridge (CSSH) 30:1(1988), pp. 171–180; Ruggiero Romano, *Les Mécanismes de la Conquête Coloniale* (Paris 1972), p. 36.

“hierarchic appearance”, under which “society was unstable and fluid”. Indeed mobility reinforced the structures¹⁶.

But this tells us little about the type of structure we are dealing with, whether corporate, caste, or class. “Light and dark skins” means race. Race gave a novel dimension to the Old World’s corporate estates, creating an “American feudalism”¹⁷. Racism implies caste; and the official concept of “the two republics”¹⁸, one Spanish the other Indian, suggests a caste or corporate system. However race mixture soon compounded the social amalgam, spreading mobility¹⁹. Hence sprang a loose perception of race²⁰. Racial tags kept hiding – or turning into – terms of class²¹.

For seventeenth-century Lima I propose a societal model suggested by Anthony Leeds’ view of Brazil circa 1950. It divides society into two spheres, a mass and an upper group. The mass is an under-class. The uppers are “the oligarchies”, made up of unions, industrialists, and military; with each group differentiated into ascending strata. All are held together by a fixed bureaucracy topped by the ruling

¹⁶ M. Mörner, “Economic Factors and Stratification in Colonial Spanish America with Special Regard to the Elites”: *HAHR* 63:2 (1983), p. 346; José Luis Romero, *Latinoamérica: las ciudades y las ideas* (Buenos Aires 1976), p. 80; Morse, “The Urban Development”, p. 97; M. Mörner, *Estratificación social hispanoamericana en el período colonial* (Stockholm 1980), p. 76.

¹⁷ M. Mörner, *Race Mixture in the History of Latin America* (Boston 1967), p. 54; R. Romano, “American Feudalism”: *HAHR*, 64:1 (1984), pp. 121–134; Pablo Macera, “Feudalismo colonial americano”: P. Macera (ed.), *Trabajos de historia*, 4 vol. (Lima 1977), vol. 3, pp. 139–227.

¹⁸ Mörner, *Race Mixture*, p. 45.

¹⁹ D.J. Robinson, “Introduction”: D.J. Robinson (ed.), *Studies in Spanish American Population History* (Boulder 1981), p. 5; Mörner, *La corona*, p. 123.

²⁰ John K. Chance, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford 1978), pp. 174, 181; Góngora, “Urban Stratification”, pp. 446–447; J. Lockhart, “Social Organization and Social Change”: *CHLA*, vol. 2 p. 287; Murdo J. MacLeod, *Spanish Central America: A Socioeconomic History, 1520–1720* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1973), pp. 228–231; S.D. Markman, “The Gridiron Town Plan and the Caste System of Colonial Central America”: Richard P. Schaedel, Jorge E. Hardoy, and Nora Scott Kinzer (eds.), *Urbanization in the Americas from Its Beginnings to the Present* (The Hague and Paris 1978), p. 483.

²¹ J.K. Chance and William B. Taylor, “Estates and Class in a Colonial Society: Oaxaca in 1792”: *CSSH* 19 (1977), pp. 485–486; Chance and Taylor, “Reply”: *CSSH* 21 (1979), pp. 438–439; Chance, *Race and Class*, pp. 132, 158, 175; Robert McCaa and Stuart B. Schwartz, “Measuring Marriage Patterns”: *CSSH* 25 (1983), p. 718; Claude Morin, “Démographie et Différences Ethniques en Amérique Latine Coloniale”: *Annales de Démographie Historique* (1977), p. 311; Patricia Seed, “Social Dimensions of Race: Mexico City, 1753”: *HAHR* 62:4 (1982), p. 601; Dennis N. Valdés, *The Decline of the “Sociedad de Castas” in Mexico City* (Ph.D., University of Michigan), p. 29.

cupola²². Leeds' columns suggest Mousnier's "corporations" or Weber's "estates"; the steps within them look like Parsonian strata, if not Marxian classes.

While such models abound²³, this one requires only minimal modification to fit the reality of Lima. Around 1640 the city's thirty odd thousand inhabitants were about evenly divided between white *españoles* and mostly black and mulatto *castas*, the latter clearly constituting the mass²⁴.

Españoles were usually middle to low. Chroniclers criticized their flight from manual trades²⁵, a flight from the rising ranks of black craftsmen or, using them, into independent enterprise²⁶. No doubt, most *españoles* shared the *castas'* work of laborers, petty traders, soldiers, and sailors. And the underworld knew no racial barriers²⁷. For their part, some light-skinned mestizos passed into the white world²⁸.

Whiteness carried a presumption of hidalgo rank²⁹. Though we may doubt if "many" were considered "knights and nobles"³⁰, they could at least dream of reaching such heights. Where the *castas*

²² Anthony Leeds, "Brazilian Careers and Social Structure: A Case History and Model": Dwight B. Heath and Richard N. Adams (eds.), *Contemporary Cultures and Societies of Latin America* (New York 1965), pp. 379–404 and fig. 1, p. 384; based on A.S. Teixeira, *Educação não é privilégio* (Rio de Janeiro 1957).

²³ "Turban" and "onion" by Inge Bátor, "Soziale Schichtung": Ilja Miecik (ed.), *Soziale Schichtung und soziale Mobilität in der Gesellschaft Alteuropas* (Berlin 1984), p. 24; "UN headquarters" and "San Gimignano" by Lawrence Stone, "Social Mobility in England, 1500–1700": *Past and Present* 33 (1966), pp. 16–17; multi-factor table by Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege* (New York 1966), p. 80.

²⁴ F. Bronner, "The Population of Lima, 1593–1637: In Quest of a Statistical Benchmark": *Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv, Neue Folge*, 5:2 (1970), pp. 107–119.

²⁵ Antonio de la Calancha, "Crónica moralizada del Orden de San Agustín en el Perú": José de la Riva Agüero (ed.), *Los cronistas de convento* (Paris 1938), p. 43; Buenaventura de Salinas y Córdova, *Memorial de las historias del Nuevo Mundo Piru* (Lima 1957/1630), p. 246.

²⁶ Lyman Johnson, "Artisans": Louisa Schell Hoberman and Susan Migden Socolow (eds.), *Cities and Society in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque 1986), pp. 240, 241.

²⁷ J.A. Suardo, *Diario de Lima de Juan Antonio Suardo (1629–1639)* (Rubén Vargas Ugarte, ed.), 2 vol. (Lima 1936), vol. 1, pp. 27, 247, vol. 2, p. 23; Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Lima (AGIL) 42, Viceroy Chinchón to King, May 24, 1629.

²⁸ AGIL 44, *Acuerdo* of June 20, 1632; AGIL 48, "Relación de los papeles, cartas y pareceres sobre la reducción general de los yndios", remitted by Viceroy Chinchón on May 9, 1637.

²⁹ Anon. (Pedro León de Portocarrero), *Descripción del virreinato del Perú* (Boleslao Lewin, ed., Rosario 1958), p. 39; Reginaldo de Lizárraga, "Descripción breve de toda la tierra del Perú. . .": Riva Agüero (ed.), op. cit., p. 153.

³⁰ B. de Salinas, op. cit., p. 246; Juan Meléndez, "Tesoros antárticos": Riva Agüero (ed.), op. cit., p. 230.

were largely ruled by ascription, *españoles* shared a chance, however slim, of achieving elite status. But in nobiliar Spain achievement carried a negative connotation³¹. So the chroniclers insisted on Lima's "most illustrious and ancient houses of Spain" who had "defended the mountains of Castile from African invasion"³². Such hyperbole was meant to clothe the successful social climber with a fig leaf. Likewise, a sense of scandal prompted remarks on the *españoles'* escape from the mechanical trades and a viceroy's grumble at the general acquisitiveness³³. Chroniclers singled out *immigrants* for leaping from rags to riches while trading with the enemy³⁴.

The newcomers were not necessarily devoted to the capitalist ethos. They knew that trade could mean wealth and bankruptcy in quick succession. Between 1613 and 1629 Lima witnessed eleven major business failures, and one of over a million pesos shook the city in 1635³⁵. With locals preempting many lay and church offices, immigrants were left with commerce as their one avenue for advancement. *Peninsulares* dominated Lima's merchant guild, as is implied by that institution's historian³⁶, and, as elsewhere, they kept sending for poor and hardy peninsular nephews³⁷.

Of my two other columns, that of conquistadors, including the descendants of the earliest settlers, was of course fully native. By law these *beneméritos* had first call on royal favors and appointments. Foremost among these was the *encomienda*, a grant of Indian tribute. But by 1600 yearly *encomienda* income rarely exceeded 1000 tribute pesos (of 12.5 *reales*) and often fell below half that amount³⁸. By 1630 *beneméritos* no longer dominated *encomiendas* and these no longer

³¹ Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *La sociedad española en el siglo XVII*, vol. I (Madrid 1963), pp. 171–174, 181–185, 195, 225, 311–322.

³² B. de Salinas, op. cit., p. 246; J. Meléndez, op. cit., p. 230. Meléndez' "mountains" might flatter immigrant Asturians and Basques.

³³ AGIL 42, Viceroy Chinchón to king, Lima, May 24, 1629.

³⁴ B. de Salinas, op. cit., p. 161; J. Meléndez, op. cit., p. 222.

³⁵ María Encarnación Rodríguez Vicente, "Una quiebra bancaria en el Perú del siglo XVII": *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español* 26 (1956), pp. 709, 715.

³⁶ M.E. Rodríguez Vicente, *El tribunal del consulado de Lima en la primera mitad del siglo XVII* (Madrid 1960), pp. 109–111.

³⁷ I. Altman, *Emigrants and Society. Extremadura and Spanish America in the Sixteenth Century* (Berkeley 1989), p. 229; James Lockhart and Enrique Otte, *Letters and People of the Spanish Indies* (Cambridge 1975), pp. 66–67, 116, 128–131, 144–146.

³⁸ Teodoro Hampe Martínez, "Sobre encomenderos y repartimientos en la diócesis de Lima a principios del siglo XVII": *JbLA* 23 (1986), pp. 126–132.

guaranteed elite status. By then most *beneméritos* had sunk to where they could not validate their claim before others³⁹.

My central column – of office – joins civil and church employment in what was since the conquest a continuum of the legal and clerical callings. High-level careers, often by peninsular Spaniards, led from government to church and back⁴⁰. Disenchanted immigrants joined convents. By 1650 Lima supported some 500 secular priests, 1000 monks and as many nuns. With their servants they exceeded one-sixth of the population. Peninsulars accounted for half the *patres*, two-thirds of the *fratres*, but were rare among nuns. Nunneries offered respectability at lower dowries than needed for marriage and some nuns had been forced to take the veil⁴¹. Men became monks “for the life rather than by vocation” or “to escapè civil law, commit crimes, deal and wheel”⁴². Armed, violent clerics of every kind were common⁴³.

The highest echelon of all three groups – conquistadors, officials, and traders – were called “the nobility”⁴⁴, or simply “knights”. The viceroy, head of “an authentic court”⁴⁵, would lead these *caballeros* in ceremonial processions⁴⁶. And a 1630 list of 149 “Knights and Nobles who are in Lima” would seem to “certify” local notables⁴⁷. With families of five, 149 “knights”, along with the *oidores*, represented

³⁹ F. Bronner, “Peruvian Encomenderos in 1630”: *HAHR* 57:4 (1977), pp. 637, 643, 649.

⁴⁰ J. Lockhart, *Spanish Peru*, pp. 49, 59. V.H. Cummins, “An Alternative Path to Success? Careers in the Sixteenth Century Church – A Case Study”: *Church and Society in Latin America* (Jeffrey A. Cole, ed., Tulane 1984), pp. 1–20.

⁴¹ Bernard Lavallé, *Recherches sur l'Apparition de la Conscience Créole dans la Vice-Royauté du Pérou*, 2 vol. (Lille 1982), vol. I, pp. 28b, 30, 117–122, 135, 275, 741; Asunción Lavrin, “Female Religious”: Schell Hobermann and Socolow (eds.), op. cit., pp. 165, 168, 170.

⁴² AGIL 43, Viceroy Chinchón to king, April 1, 1630; AGIL 160, *Fiscal Encinillas* to king, May 30, 1629. Examples of escape from the law in B. Lavallé, *Recherches*, vol. I, pp. 125–126.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, pp. 255–274.

⁴⁴ Antonio Vázquez de Espinosa, *Compendio y descripción de las Indias Occidentales* (Charles U. Clark, ed., Washington 1948), pars. 1230, 1240, 1277; Suardo, op. cit. I, pp. 286, 295, II, p. 198.

⁴⁵ Barnadas, op. cit. p. 137.

⁴⁶ Suardo, op. cit. I, pp. 4, 47, 69, 111–112.

⁴⁷ Biblioteca de la Universidad de Sevilla 330/122, ff. 210–212 and again 214–216. “Memoria de los caballeros y hijos de algo que ay en Lima”. Its date is assumed from the nearly coeval “Relación de los Feudatarios deste Reyno”, in *discurso* 10 of Francisco López de Caravantes, “Tercera parte de la noticia general de las prouincias del Peru que pertenece al gouierno de la guerra. . Los Reyes. . 1631”, Biblioteca de Palacio, Madrid, 1632/II.

around 800 individuals, or some 2.7 per cent of Lima's population. This, according to Mark Burkholder, would qualify as a right proportion for the elite⁴⁸.

Interaction between the three elites reveals the ostensible and the real nature of the state-economic-religious equation.

Hemmed in by prejudice, even successful *beneméritos* only married such merchants or merchants' sons as had acquired estates and council seats⁴⁹. Shopkeeping was not quite respectable. The heads of Lima's merchant guild must sell their stores and they kept struggling for social recognition⁵⁰.

So the bureaucrats held the center of the stage. Neither hampered by *benemérito* inhibitions nor threatened by bankruptcy like the merchants, the highest office holders intermarried with successful members of the two other "estates"⁵¹. Add to this the factor of favor in conditioning promotions, and the entire system appears based on the primacy of politics over economics.

To make our "capitalist case" worse, *limeños* dissipated their wealth notoriously. It was a way of gaining status through "noble liberality". It featured costly coaches but also charity and the church⁵².

Religious largesse was neither fortuitous nor wasteful. One invested in philanthropy. By helping family, establishing bread funds, donating church silver to his home village as well as to his adoptive American home, the successful migrant built up his prestige and also assured himself of loyal manpower. "These donations were a key feature tying Spain to her colonies"⁵³. Religious practices enhanced clientelism. The patron enlarged his following as syndic or witness at a wedding or baptism, and by joining confraternities or third orders.

⁴⁸ Mark A. Burkholder, "Titled Nobles, Elite, and Independence: Some Comments": *LARR*, 13:2 (1978), pp. 290–295.

⁴⁹ Bronner, "Peruvian Encomenderos", pp. 644–646.

⁵⁰ Rodríguez Vicente, *El tribunal*, pp. 77, 78, 108, 285.

⁵¹ Pedro Rodríguez Crespo, "Parentescos de los oidores de Lima con los grupos superiores de la sociedad colonial": *Revista del Instituto Peruano de Investigaciones Genealógicas* 14(1965), pp. 17–24.

⁵² Bernabé Cobo, "Historia de la fundación de Lima": *Monografías históricas sobre la Ciudad de Lima*, 2 vol., (Consejo Provincial de Lima 1935), p. 72; Calancha, op. cit., p. 43; Meléndez, op. cit., p. 229; Salinas, op. cit., p. 110; Suardo, op. cit., p. 87, II, p. 151.

⁵³ Edith Couturier, "Family and Fortune: The Origins of an Entrepreneurial Career in Eighteenth-Century Andalucía and Querétaro: The Case of Pedro Romero de Terreros: 1710–1740": *MACLAS Latin American Essays*, II (1989), pp. 61–75, pp. 62, 64 (refers to seventeenth-century tradition).

Conversely, “third order Franciscan adherents (believed that) the idea that amassing wealth partook of a sacred character (as carried out) for the poor”⁵⁴. Donations to found *capellanías* not only insured an exalted burial and bountiful masses but also the placement of relatives as nuns, curates or chaplains⁵⁵.

In Lima devout generosity came forth mainly from merchants. Their guild heard masses, prayed for its dead, venerated the Virgin; yet tempered such celebrations when cash ran low⁵⁶. It patronized the Hospital of Charity, and the twenty odd girls who worked there received support and schooling; plus a dowry of 300 or 400 pesos, depending on race. The guild also bought a house “for scandalous and distracted women”⁵⁷. Chronicler Suardo lists some individual bounties. Silversmith Antonio Ruíz Barragán founded a chapel in the church of San Agustín, Merchant Bartolomé González donated 18,000 pieces of eight upon his election as majordomo of the Hospital of Charity, while Merchant-Banker Bernardo de Villegas was hailed as “steward and restorer” of the Santa Ana hospital for Indians⁵⁸. He entertained viceroy and archbishop, married his daughter to a genuine knight of Santiago, endowing her with 180,000 pesos. Villegas’ munificence helped cloak a corner on tar and several near-bankruptcies⁵⁹.

For officials business meant using political leverage for graft. Their opportunities kept growing with the crown’s desperate fiscal expedients. Three outstanding forms of speculation relied on merchant partnership.

In a world dominated by commerce, “all are dealers and merchants though through others and underhand, and the viceroy sells and even the archbishop”⁶⁰. Contraband of every kind became deeply rooted⁶¹. Chinese silks kept entering Lima’s harbor of Callao. Therefore, observed a contemporary, “the owners’ costs run higher than if they

⁵⁴ Ibidem, p. 66.

⁵⁵ Gisela von Wobeser, “Las fundaciones piadosas como fuentes de crédito en la época colonial”: *Historia Mexicana*, 38:4, No. 152 (1989), p. 780; Lavallé, *Recherches*, I, pp. 241–251.

⁵⁶ Rodríguez Vicente, *El tribunal*, pp. 100–101.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, pp. 102–105; Suardo, op. cit., II, pp. 14, 174.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, I, pp. 17, 282; II, p. 82.

⁵⁹ Ibidem, I, pp. 41, 63, 77, 80, 281, 294, 301; II, p. 163. Last two entries specify knighthood of Admiral don Andrés de las Infantas.

⁶⁰ Anon. (P. León de Portocarrero), op. cit., p. 61.

⁶¹ Rodríguez Vicente, *El tribunal*, pp. 259–273.

paid duties because of what they call in the Indies ‘a good deal’⁶². This *buena negociación* benefited the most exalted. For instance, *Oidor* don Alonso Pérez de Salazar relied on Francisco Gutierrez Coca, his in-law, guild merchant and one of the 149 “knights”, to smuggle slaves and silver⁶³.

Speedy commercial profits awaited the district governors, or *corregidores*. Though their adequate salaries generally came to 1000 tribute pesos a year⁶⁴, they were known to put away “up to twenty and thirty thousand” in a two-year term⁶⁵. They did this mainly through the forced sales of goods to Indians, while financing their initial investments from the Indians’ own community funds⁶⁶. In 1631 the crown chose to “borrow” from these funds and the viceroy emptied them by 1639⁶⁷. Thereafter the *corregidores* “were tied to the mercantile interests that supplied the distributed goods”⁶⁸. By the eighteenth century a number of merchants became *corregidores*⁶⁹.

In 1633 began “the systematic sale of high-ranking treasury appointments”⁷⁰. The buyers often owed the treasury the very funds they had paid for their offices. Revenues diminished, crown funds disappeared. The viceroy saw his patronage undermined, and connived in the irregularities⁷¹. Then, in 1687, office sales were even extended to the *oidores*. Henceforth they were native sons or else “firmly rooted in

⁶² Diego Pérez Gallego, “Alguna parte del acertado y prudente gobierno... de Chinchón”: Biblioteca de Palacio, Madrid, 2774, f. 30v (unnumbered); and reprinted in José Luis Muzquiz de Miguel, *El conde de Chinchón, virrey del Perú* (Sevilla 1945), p. 307.

⁶³ AGIL 162, don Juan de Sandóval y Sotomayor to king, Lima, May 26, 1635.

⁶⁴ Guillermo Lohmann Villena, *El corregidor de indios en el Perú bajo los Austrias* (Madrid 1957), pp. 595–600.

⁶⁵ AGIL 43, Chinchón to king, Lima, April 18, 1630 (Gobierno secular 37).

⁶⁶ AGIL 44, Viceroy Chinchón to king, Lima, May 9, 1633 (Hacienda 47); Lohmann Villena, *op. cit.* pp. 434–436.

⁶⁷ AGIL 45 and 46, Hacienda 50 of May 10, 1635; AGIL 47, Hacienda 70 of May 16, 1636; AGIL 49, Hacienda 64 of May 18, 1639, and Hacienda 69 of May 23, 1639. All are letters sent from Lima by Viceroy Chinchón to the king.

⁶⁸ Jeffrey A. Cole, review of Brooke Larsons’s *Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation in Bolivia* (Princeton 1988): *American Historical Review* 95:2 (1990), p. 632.

⁶⁹ Javier Tord and Carlos Lazo, *Hacienda, comercio, fiscalidad y luchas sociales (Perú colonial)*, (Lima 1981), pp. 95–96.

⁷⁰ Kenneth J. Andrien, “The Sale of Fiscal Offices and the Decline of Royal Authority in the Viceroyalty of Peru, 1633–1700”: *HAHR* 62:1 (1982), pp. 49, 50.

⁷¹ *Idem*, *Crisis and Decline. The Viceroyalty of Peru in the Seventeenth Century* (Albuquerque 1985), pp. 111, 115, 123–126.

local society by social and economic ties"⁷². These ties were mercantile. If the merchants did not themselves become treasury or audit officials they posted their bond⁷³. Outgoing officials had to undergo a similarly secured judicial review, or *residencia*. Observed a contemporary: "The viceroy favors the merchant guild because these men are to vouch for him at the *residencia*"⁷⁴.

Before the century was out, crown divestments and imperfect controls had brought about a new colonial compact, "intertwining magistrate and merchant", and with "the authorities increasingly at the service of the high (local) strata"⁷⁵.

The church was itself deeply enmeshed in profit-making activities, from the prestigious convents with their heavy investment in *censos* down to the lowly countryside *doctrineros* whose parishes supported their families. Convents and curacies were turned into textile mills⁷⁶. Lima's "convents, chantries, pious works, hospitals and religious confraternities heavily engaged in financial transactions"⁷⁷. Conventual real estate was considerable. Around 1636 three Jesuit institutions owned thirty-five houses, fifteen *casitas*, twenty-one stores; and by 1681 just one of these, the College of San Pablo, was receiving interest on mortgages worth 400,000 pesos. Complaints against this accumulation were raised in vain. "The orders had become relatively autonomous from civil, even ecclesiastic, authorities"⁷⁸. On the other hand, the orders were also working for private investors, thanks to "a close family and/or personal relation (with) the borrowers. Private lay owners regarded the endowment of a chantry or Pious Work or the grant of

⁷² Mark A. Burkholder and D.S. Chandler, *From Impotence to Authority: The Spanish Crown and the American Audiencias, 1687-1808* (Columbia, London 1977), p. VII.

⁷³ Andrien, "The Sale", p. 64.

⁷⁴ AGIL 162, Contador Hernando de Valencia to king, undated but written in Lima around the end of April 1634, ff. 1v, 2v.

⁷⁵ Fernando Muro Romero, "La reforma del pacto colonial en Indias. Notas sobre instituciones de gobierno y sociedad en el siglo XVII": *JbLA* 19 (1982), pp. 65, 67; Zacarias Moutoukias, "Power, Corruption and Commerce: The Making of the Local Administrative Structure in Seventeenth-Century Buenos Aires": *HAHR* 68:4 (1988), pp. 778, 799.

⁷⁶ B. Lavallé, "Las doctrinas de indígenas como núcleos de explotación colonial (siglos XVI-XVII)": *Allpanchis phuuuringa*, 16:19 (Cuzco 1982), pp. 156-157; idem, *Recherches* I, pp. 146-151.

⁷⁷ Brian R. Hamnett, "Church Wealth in Peru: Estates and Loans in the Archdiocese of Lima in the Seventeenth Century": *JbLA* 10 (1973), p. 114.

⁷⁸ Lavallé, *Recherches* I, pp. 213-240, 254.

a daughter's dowry on entering religious life as the equivalent of a modern bank deposit"⁷⁹.

The spirit of combining material with spiritual profit, claimed here for seventeenth-century Spanish Americans has only been intimated through some of their actions. Perhaps their thoughts could be documented through the testaments found in notarial records. Such *protocolos* abound in Peru's national archive and their analysis would be a major undertaking. Meanwhile the John Carter Brown Library of Providence, Rhode Island, has afforded one meaningful item of printed evidence.

It is a set of by-laws governing the lives of orphan girls at the *Colegio de Santa Cruz*. Before glossing these "constitutions", a word about their sponsors. Mateo Pastor de Velasco, a native of Puerto Llano near the town of Almodóvar in La Mancha, Spain, moved to Lima, prospered as a druggist, became a *familiar* of the inquisition, and married the *limeña*, doña Francisca Velez Michel. The childless Pastors made out their last will in 1654. In it they endowed twelve white girls, to be brought up under the patronage of the inquisition⁸⁰.

To justify this document as an expression of merchant faith, two difficulties must first be overcome. Pastor was not known as *mercader* but as *boticario*. But these callings were practically indistinct because druggists sold more than they prescribed. A generation earlier, *Boticario* Antolín de Reynoso began his career by obtaining a contract to supply medicines to the navy, then branched into the ice monopoly⁸¹. Secondly, Pastor was dead by the time Inquisitor don Cristóbal de Castilla y Zamora signed these "constitutions" along with two aides. However it happened not long after Pastor's demise and surely expressed his wishes. Then, too, the inquisitor was himself a peninsular Spaniard, indeed he was one of Philip IV's brood of bastards⁸². We can therefore assume that these rules reflect the mind of Spanish immigrants and probably of the mercantile estate.

The *Colegio de Santa Cruz* was to house one *rectora* – preferably without children or close relatives –, one female teacher, one cook,

⁷⁹ Hamnett, *op. cit.* p. 116, n. 10.

⁸⁰ Manuel de Mendiburu, *Diccionario histórico-biográfico del Perú* 8 vol. (Lima 1874–1890), vol. 6, pp. 248–249.

⁸¹ AGIL 46, Reynoso's dateless (June 1632) petition to king, with *estanco de la nieve* documents, encl. with Chinchón to king, Lima, Nov. 10, 1635 (Hacienda 52).

⁸² Mendiburu, *op. cit.* vol. 2, pp. 318–319.

one laundress, and the twelve girls. These were to be chosen from the Atocha orphanage at age eight to twelve, and prepared for either marriage or the convent. To this end the *maestra* shall teach them to sew, read, cook, launder, sweep, “and whatever is appropriate for marriage”; to sing and play an instrument as future nuns. Both brides and novices were given dowries. However these had to be returned if a girl died childless or before taking her vows, or if she left the convent before professing or had her marriage annulled. Marrying or taking the veil without permission meant forfeiting the dowry⁸³.

If run according to its twenty-nine *constituciones*, the *colegio* was a model prison, “not to be entered by any man or woman”. Any business was transacted through the door or railing, the choir grill separated communicants from priests, and a visiting physician was constantly escorted. The girls rose before six, prayed endlessly and on their knees, worked at handicrafts, had little free time and that strictly supervised, and ate two meals a day from the same earthenware while listening to devotional readings. Two week-long vacations relieved the routine, except for prayers. All the residents wore the same gray serge skirt, doublet and scapulary (this last denied to the two servants), and only occasional silk stockings. The all-female house was locked for the night with two different keys, one for the *rectora* another for the *maestra*, and the girls’ dormitory was locked yet again⁸⁴. For “the incorrigible or haughty” a room was equipped with stocks and set aside as a prison⁸⁵.

This is not exactly a capitalist’s dream. Still, trimmed of the cult, some of the rules would have been recognized in Charles Dickens’ England or Simon Schama’s Holland. Puritanism prevailed, “non-doctrinal” and “moral” as ascribed to the *Zeitgeist* by H.R. Trevor Roper⁸⁶. Though not exactly feminist or egalitarian, it was no “puritanism of the right”⁸⁷. Santa Cruz elevated the foundling to a respectable place in society, either as nun or as wife of a rich burgher, or at least of his poor relation. The “elevation” may of course have

⁸³ John Carter Brown Library. Providence. (JCBL), BB S7336, *Constituciones del Colegio de Santa Cruz de las niñas expósitass en la casa de nuestra señora de Atocha desta ciudad de Los Reyes...* (13 alternately numbered pages, also “357–362”, no place, printer or date), 2–4, pars 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, 3–6v, pars 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 20, 29.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, 6, pars 26.

⁸⁶ H.R. Trevor Roper, “The General Crisis of the 17th Century”: *Past and Present* 16 (1959), p. 50.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 49.

been mitigated when the selectors of a waif knew her paternity. To grow up healthy and lady-like, *colegialas* must be well-fed – their diet was spelled out meticulously – and be addressed with respect, never by the familiar *vos* or *tu*⁸⁸. To qualify as nuns they must undergo the rigors of seclusion, become literate, and, if sufficiently musical, save the dowry⁸⁹. There, and in the provision for strict daily accounts⁹⁰, the Christian faith of its founders was tempered by their capitalist scruples.

RESUMEN

Hacia mediados del siglo diecisiete la empresa privada y el espíritu capitalista lograron dominar el imperio hispanoamericano. En Lima, donde muchos peninsulares hallaron seguridad en carreras eclesiásticas, los más ambiciosos se enriquecieron a través del comercio y con la ayuda de funcionarios. Había oidores que encubrían el contrabando mientras que los corregidores financiaban sus negocios mediante empréstitos de mercaderes. El mismo virrey contaba con los mercaderes para las fianzas de su juicio de residencia. El comercio involucraba riesgos y provocaba desprecios, pero el afán del lucro era inseparable de todo el complejo Iglesia-Gobierno. Iglesias y monasterios manejaban obrajes y otorgaban créditos. Hasta la caridad era una inversión que proporcionaba prestigio y seguridad económica al filántropo. La ética del puritanismo halló su perfecta expresión en los estatutos del *Colegio de Santa Cruz* de Lima donde doce niñas huérfanas fueron sometidas a un severo reglamento y disciplina que las preparaba sea para la vocación de monjas o de esposas.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Um die Mitte des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts war das spanisch-amerikanische Kolonialreich von Privatunternehmertum und kapitalistischem Geist beherrscht. In Lima, wo viele *peninsulares* Sicherheit in einer kirchlichen Karriere fanden, gelangten die ehrgeizigsten Einwanderer durch den Handel zu Reichtum. Darin wurden sie auch von Beamten unterstützt. Es gab *oidores*, die den Schmuggel deckten,

⁸⁸ JCBL, BB S7336, *Constituciones*, 5–5v, pars 19, 20.

⁸⁹ Lavrin, *op. cit.* pp. 166, 178, 185.

⁹⁰ JCBL, BB S7336, *Constituciones*, 5v, pars 21, 23.

während die *corregidores* ihre Geschäfte mit Anleihen von Kaufleuten finanzierten. Sogar der Vizekönig verließ sich bei der Überprüfung seiner Amtsführung auf Kaufleute. Der Handel war ebenso gefährvoll wie in Verruf, aber der Gewinntrieb durchdrang die Gesamtheit von Kirche und Staat. Kirchen und Klöster verwalteten *obrajes* und gewährten Kredit. Selbst Wohltätigkeit galt als Investition in Prestige und als wirtschaftliche Absicherung des Philanthropen. Die geradezu puritanische Ethik fand ihren vollen Ausdruck in den Vorschriften des *Colegio de Santa Cruz* zu Lima, in dem zwölf Waisenmädchen einem strengen Regiment unterworfen waren, um sich auf die alternative „Berufung“ Nonne oder Gemahlin vorzubereiten.

