

THE EARLY LIFE OF LUIS DE VELASCO, THE YOUNGER: THE FUTURE VICEROY AS BOY AND YOUNG MAN

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The story of Luis de Velasco, the younger, as narrated in most secondary sources is a gripping one. The story goes that he came out to New Spain in 1549, at about age ten, in the company of his father, the viceroy Luis de Velasco. His mother and older brother remained in Spain, although she came to Mexico for a period of a few years before the death of her husband, returning to Spain, where she eventually died. The young Velasco, also purportedly appears in a painting of the manifestation of the Virgen of Guadalupe's miraculous image to the archbishop of Mexico, and the viceroy.¹ Unfortunately, however romantic and exciting these versions are, they lack a sound basis in the documentation. The early life of Luis de Velasco was indeed exciting, but for reasons far different from those contained in the traditional accounts.

According to the best evidence available, Luis de Velasco, the younger, was born in his family's home in Carrión de los Condes, Palencia, in Spain. Carrión has a fame from Spanish literature. In the poem of the *Cid*, Carrión is famous for being the hometown of the *infantes* who came to woo the daughters of Rui Díaz de Vivar. They married his daughters, then mistreated them badly. The *Cid* heard of this abominable behavior, rode to Carrión and slew them.² Carrión was also the home to Velasco's grandfather, the first Marquis of Santillana, Íñigo López de Mendoza. Santillana is a famous late medieval Spanish poet.

¹ José Ignacio Rubio Mañé, *Introducción al estudio de los virreyes de Nueva España*, 4 v., México, Ediciones selectas Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1955-1963, v. 1, p. 223-226. María Justina Sarabia Viejo, *Luis de Velasco, virrey de la Nueva España, 1550-1564*, Sevilla, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1978, p. 473-475.

² *Poema del mio Cid*, esp. lines 2492-3505.

Important in the life of Velasco, part of Carrión's renown comes from its location astride the pilgrimage route to Santiago Compostela. (See Figure 1) The pilgrimage route passed right in front of the Velasco family home, passing by the churches of Santa María del Camino and Santiago, and then exiting the city near the monastery of san Zoilo. The imposing monastery hospital of san Zoilo was an important stop on the pilgrimage route. For a young boy, growing up in the town, son of one of the noble families of the community, it must have been an exciting place to live. The family home is located across the street from the south door of the parish church of Santa María del Camino. To this day the old house maintains its original facade, decorated with a sculpture of an eagle under the main balcony, with the family coat of arms to one side. (See Figure 2) The importance of the cult of Santiago had a lasting effect on young Luis. As he grew he eventually joined the military religious order dedicated to the cult and remained actively involved for the rest of his life.

The ancestors and family of young Luis include some of the leading figures of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spain. In a direct line, Velasco was a member of the extended clan of the Dukes of Frias, Counts of Haro, and Constables of Castile. (See Chart I, Velasco and Fernández de Velasco Lineage) The founder of this lineage was Juan de Velasco (1368-1418), *camarero mayor* to the Kings of Castile. His elder son, Pedro Fernández de Velasco, became the first Count of Haro. His other son, Hernando de Velasco, retained the rights to the lordships of Siruela and Salinas de Pisuega. These sons died in the 1470s and were succeeded by their eldest sons, Pedro Fernández de Velasco and Juan de Velasco, respectively. Pedro, the second Count of Haro, became the Constable of Castile, a title which his heirs would then retain. His son, the third Count and second Constable, received the title of Duke of Frias.

Back to the second line, Juan de Velasco was the elder of two brothers. He became the first Count of Siruela, while his younger brother, Pedro de Velasco, gained the rights to the lordship of Salinas. Pedro was the great-grandfather of Luis de Velasco, the younger. Although to modern sensibilities, the relationship of Luis de Velasco to the Constables of Castile seems tenuous at best, in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, they considered themselves close relatives. In the documentation collected when Luis, the

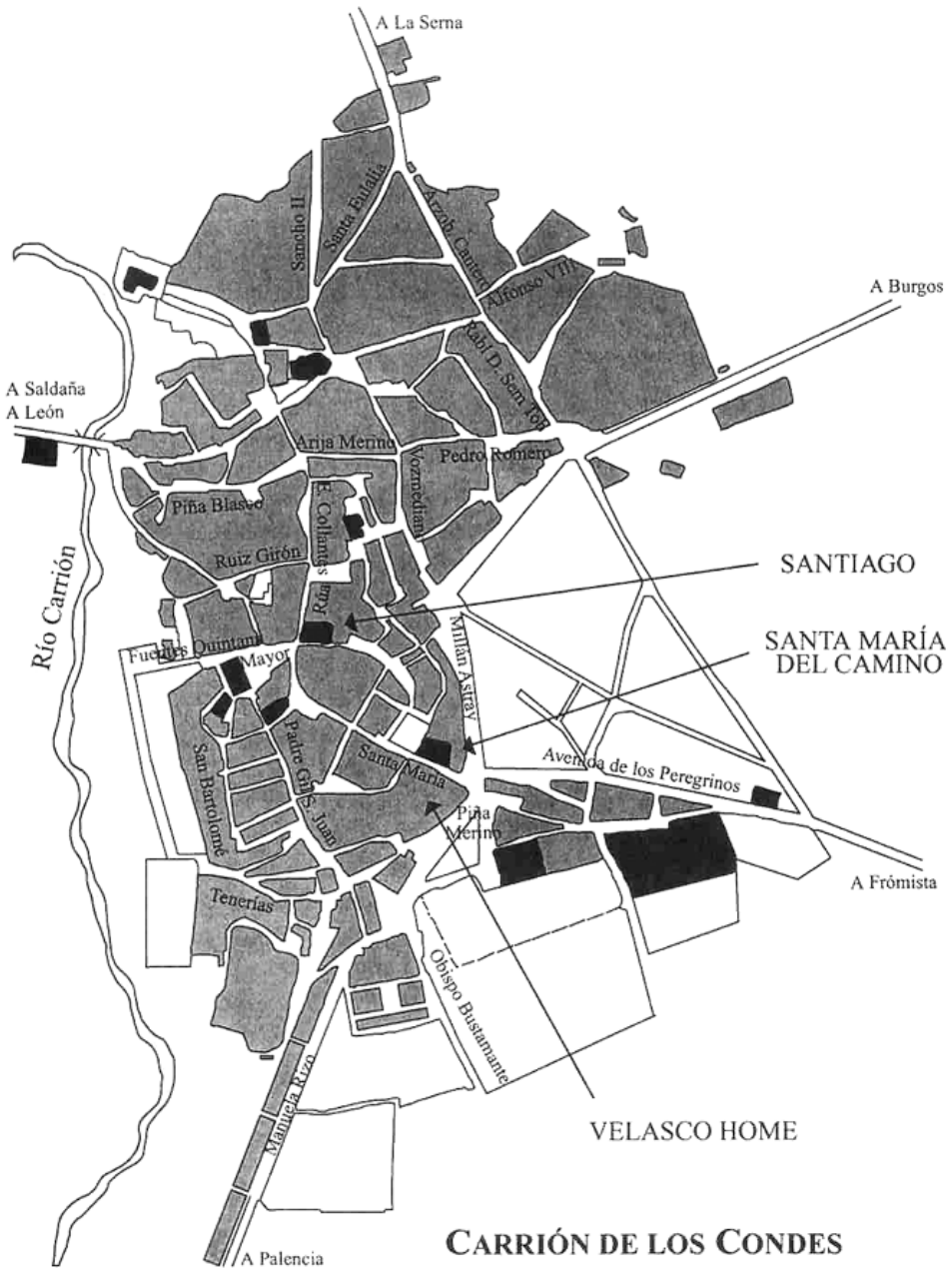


Figure 1. Carrión de los Condes

younger, entered the military religious order of Santiago, the witnesses testified that the Velascos of Carrión were close relatives of the Constables, that the Constable called them cousin and that they called him cousin too.³

On his mother's side, Luis, the younger, was related to the Mendoza clan and to the medieval kings of Castile. (See Chart II, Castilla Lineage) Velasco's mother, doña Ana de Castilla was the daughter of Diego de Castilla and doña Beatriz de Mendoza. Doña Beatriz, in turn, was the daughter of the second Marquis of Santillana, the first Duke of the Infantado, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza. On the Castilla side, Luis' mother, was descended from King Pedro of Castile and Juana de Castro. Their child, the Infante Juan, was imprisoned by his uncle, Enrique II, in the castle of Soria, but had an affair with the daughter of the castle master, doña Elvira de Eril y Falces. Their son, Pedro de Castilla, eventually became Bishop of Palencia, but first had children by Isabel de Drochelin, and English woman, and by María Fernández Bernal. Sancho de Castilla, Ana's grandfather was the child of Bishop Pedro and María.⁴

The Mendoza and Velasco clans were closely allied in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Spain. The alliances appear in most of the branches, over extended periods of time. Obviously the marriage of Ana de Castilla, a member of the Mendoza clan through her mother, to Luis de Velasco had the net effect of linking the two clans, with the Castilla involved as well. Similarly, the wife of the first Velasco Constable of Castile, Pedro Fernández de Velasco, second Count of Haro, was a Mendoza, Mencia de Mendoza, the daughter of the first Marquis of Santillana. The clans had developed their close relationship in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries as the battle for, and against, various Castilian monarchs. They were among the leading supporters of Isabel and Ferdinand in the early sixteenth century, and important among the backers of the Habsburg monarch when Charles arrived in 1517.⁵

Luis de Velasco clearly belonged to a family with strong ties to other powerful clans in early modern Spain. All evidence points to

³ Archivo Histórico de Notarías (en adelante AHN), Órdenes Militares, Santiago, 718.

⁴ Alberto García Carraffa, *Enciclopedia heráldica y genealógica hispano-americana*, Madrid, A. Marzo, 1919-1926, v. 25, p. 79-89.

⁵ Helen Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance, 1350-1550*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1979, p. 172.

Chart I
VELASCO AND FERNÁNDEZ DE VELASCO LINEAGE

Juan Fernández de Velasco

Pedro Fernández de Velasco
I Duque de Hero

Pedro Fernández de Velasco
I Condestable, II Haro

Bernardino Fernández de Velasco
II Condestable, III Haro

Íñigo Fernández de Velasco
III Condestable, IV Haro

Pedro Fernández de Velasco
IV Condestable, V Haro

Fernando de Velasco
Señor de Siruela y Salinas

Juan de Velasco
I Conde de Siruela

Pedro de Velasco
Señor de Salinas

Antonio de Velasco
Señor de Salinas

Luis de Velasco I + Ana de Castilla
Señor de Salinas

Luis de Velasco II
I Marqués de Salinas

Chart II
CASTILLA LINEAGE

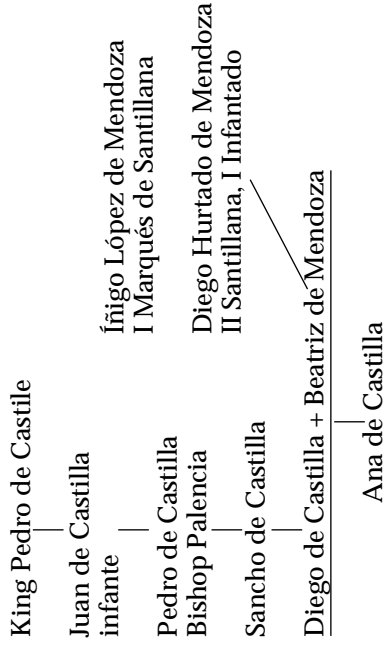


Chart III
CHILDREN OF ANTONIO DE VELASCO

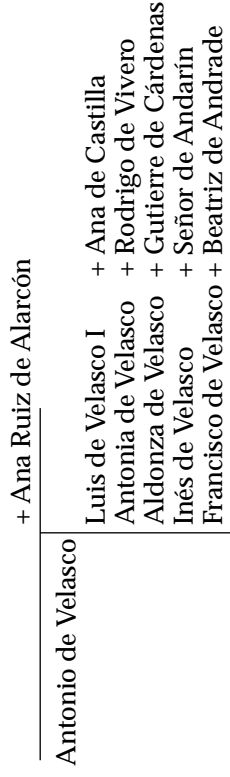


Chart IV
CHILDREN OF LUIS DE VELASCO I

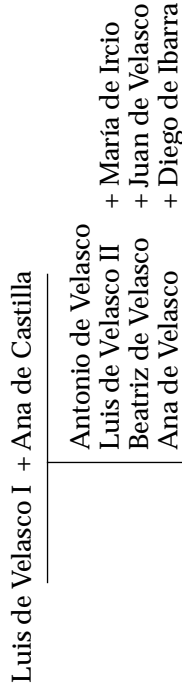
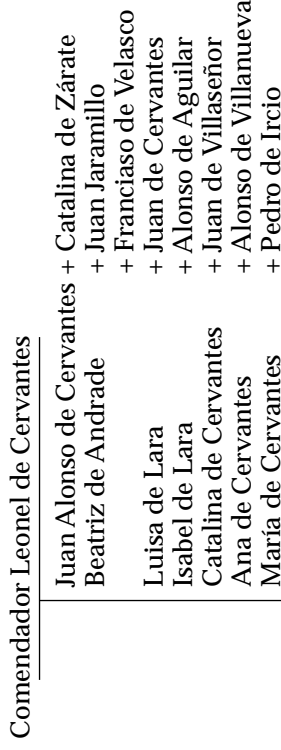


Chart V
CERVANTES FAMILY



him growing up in the family home in Carrión. In terms of the times, he had a relatively small immediate family. His father, Luis, the elder, had only three brothers and three sisters. (See Chart III, Children of Antonio de Velasco) Two of the brothers died in infancy. The eldest sister, Antonia de Velasco, married Rodrigo de Vivero. The son of this marriage, also called Rodrigo, came to Mexico as part of the entourage of the elder Luis and founded the dynasty that would eventually become the Counts of the Orizaba Valley. The next eldest sister of Luis, the elder, Alza de Velasco, married Gutierre de Cárdenas, lord of Colmenar and brother of the Duke of Maqueda. The youngest sister, Inés de Velasco, married in France to the lord of Andarin. Luis, the elder's, only living brother, and a half-brother at that, was Francisco de Velasco, who also accompanied him to Mexico and eventually married Beatriz de Andrade, one of the more colorful women of the middle sixteenth century in Mexico.⁶ Of the seven children, only three were living in Spain and married at the time that Luis, the younger, was growing up. From the evidence, the only cousins with whom Luis, the younger, had relations were the Viveros.

Luis, the younger, came from an even smaller family. (See Chart IV, Children of Luis de Velasco I) He had one brother and two sisters. His brother, Antonio de Velasco, was about six years older, never married, and died at a relatively young age, probably thirty five.⁷ Luis' younger sister, Ana de Castilla, remained in Carrión when their father became viceroy of Mexico. Their father later arranged a marriage for her to Diego de Ibarra, one of the leading silver miners of sixteenth-century Mexico. Luis' elder sister, Beatriz de Velasco, married a relative, Juan de Velasco, son of Bernardino de Velasco. Their children became the Counts of Salazar. Later in his life, Luis de Velasco, the younger, would renew their relationship. Consequently, Luis really only had two sets of nieces and nephews, one set were born and lived in Mexico, the other in Europe. Similarly his cousins consisted of one group from Mexico, and another group in Europe.

Little or nothing in the historical record tells of the young Luis' life in Carrión. As noted earlier, documentation points to his birth

⁶ Real Academia de la Historia de Madrid, colección Salazar y Castro, v. 30, f. 223v.

⁷ Luis de Salazar y Castro, *Los comendadores de la orden de Santiago*, 2 v., Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1949, v. II, p. 615, lists the *encomienda* of Montemolin becoming vacant in 1568. Antonio had been appointed *comendador* in 1559.



Figure 2. Eagle House

in either 1538 or 1539. The historical record begins only when his father traveled to Mexico to assume the viceregency. Much traditional scholarship assumed that the young Luis accompanied his father.⁸ Nevertheless, all of the extant records point to him remaining in Spain. Three letters indicate that young Luis continued to live in Spain. In the first without a date, but internally from 1551, Luis, the elder, requests that his elder son, Antonio, be granted a position at court. The petition indicates that none of his children accompanied him to Mexico.⁹ A few months later, Ana de Castilla, wife of the elder Luis, sent two letters to the Prince with similar requests. She specifically requested that Antonio be given the command of troops that his father had previously held and that the younger Luis receive a pension.¹⁰ The letter that carries a date of 1 February and can be placed as written in 1551, gives the most details of all. It repeats the request that Antonio receive his father's command and that Luis receive a pension, but also provides information about the other children. Ana described how Beatriz had married her kinsman, Juan de Velasco and she requested that Juan be taken on as a member of the royal household. Lastly, she provided details about young Luis. In addition to requesting a pension for him, she noted that he had begun to study at the University of Salamanca.¹¹ These documents also indicate that Antonio de Velasco was born in 1533 and began service in the royal household as a page at age seven. Luis, then, was some five to six years younger. Consequently one might imagine that young Luis might also have entered into service either in the royal household, or in the household of his kinsman, the Constable of Castile. Nevertheless, he attended the university, which was fairly uncommon for members of the higher Spanish nobility. It indicates that the family appreciated the value of the education in the future career of their son. Since his older brother would logically inherit the bulk of the family estate, a life in the government or church bureaucracy was an appropriate career path, especially since his father had already embarked on a governmental career.

⁸ Rubio Mañé, *op. cit.*, v. I. P. 223; Sarabia Viejo, *Luis de Velasco*, p. 6.

⁹ Archivo del Duque del Infantado, México, v. 10, Velasco to Prince [1550].

¹⁰ Real Academia de la Historia, colección Muñoz, v. 68, A-113, doña Ana del Castillo to the Prince [1551].

¹¹ Francisco del Paso y Troncoso, *Epistolario de la Nueva España*, 16 v., México, Antigua Librería Robredo, 1939-1942), 15, 9-10. Archivo General de Indias en Sevilla (en adelante AGI), México, p. 168.

When Luis de Velasco served as viceroy of Peru in order to add weight to his request to retire from royal service, in a letter to the crown he mentioned that he had served the royal family since the time of the marriage of Philip and Mary, Queen of England. In 1599, Velasco wrote: “from the age of sixteen I began to serve Your Majesty when I traveled to England and Flanders”.¹² If Luis, the younger, was born in 1538, the trip to England and Flanders would be that of 1554, when (then) Prince Philip traveled to England to marry Mary, Queen of England. Among the members of the prince’s household was Antonio de Velasco, a “gentilhombre de la boca” for the prince.¹³ The *gentilhombres* as a group served as the personal retainers of the royal family. The *gentilhombres de la boca* served the royal personage when he dined and consisted of members of the highest nobility. The documentation shows that Antonio de Velasco served as a *gentilhombre de la boca* for Prince Philip from 1551-1556, including the time the prince was in England. Moreover, as early as 1543, Antonio was a page in the royal household, specifically serving Prince Philip.¹⁴

Further evidence supports Velasco’s contention that he accompanied the prince to England and Flanders. The documentation concerning Velasco’s entrance into the Order of Santiago details the fact that the court was in Brussels. Moreover, in Brussels the king officiated at the ceremony in which Velasco formally entered into the order.¹⁵ During this same period the king appointed Antonio, Velasco’s older brother, the Comendador of Montemolin, administrator of one of the estates owned by the order. Subsequent to that appointment the king also relieved Antonio from residing on the *encomienda*, allowed him to pursue private suits and court cases in addition to the concerns of the *encomienda*, and other considerations. He continued him in his status as *gentilhombre*. Very soon thereafter young Luis received a permanent pension from the order of Santiago in the amount of 12 000 marevedises. This pension was quite normal for leading members of the order.¹⁶ In spite of all the

¹² Roberto Levellier, *Gobernantes del Perú: Cartas y papeles*, 14 v., Madrid, Suc. de Rivadeneira and Imprenta de Juan Pueyo, 1921-1926, p. 14, 238, “desde edad de diez y seis años comenzo a servir a vuestra magestad quando paso a Inglaterra y Flandes.”

¹³ Archivo General de Simancas (en adelante AGS), Casas y Sitios Reales, 33, f. 6-8.

¹⁴ AGS, Casas y Sitios Reales, 126, 13 March 1543.

¹⁵ AHN, Órdenes Militares, Santiago, 8661; Órdenes Militares, Lib. 51-C, f. 27v.

¹⁶ AHN, Órdenes Militares, Lib. 51-C, f. 93-94, 232-293.

favorable auguries surrounding Velasco's entrance into the Order of Santiago, things did not follow the normal process.

Once a man had entered the order, because of the military nature of the order, the regulations required that he serve for six months on the Spanish galleys in the Mediterranean, as an officer, no doubt. Furthermore, because of the religious nature of the order, he also had to spend three months in the monastery of Uclés on a spiritual retreat. Only once a member had fulfilled these obligations could he make his full and solemn profession to the order. None of this was possible for Luis de Velasco, the younger. Within six months of his entrance into the order, he was setting sail for the New World. It would be sixteen years before Velasco could satisfy these requirements.¹⁷ Membership in the order also carried other obligations. Members were forbidden from wearing clothes made of silk or brocade, clothes of any color other than black, or any significant amount of jewelry. Normally members appeared in austere black doublets, breeches, and a cape bearing the red cross insignia of the order. Furthermore, because members of the order were by definition gentlemen, *caballeros*, they had to demonstrate their skill on the horse, a *caballo*. Indeed, they were forbidden from riding in carriages. Many nobles in the order quickly petitioned the crown for relief from these regulations, but Velasco did not, until he was in his seventies and once more living in Spain.¹⁸ Lastly, members of the order also had to receive specific permission to marry, demonstrating the purity of lineage of their chosen bride.

From the summer of 1559 until January 1560, Luis de Velasco left Brussels, returned to Spain, and arranged his trip to Mexico. His older brother wrote their father in October that young Luis was making the preparations for the trip. Antonio also reported that he had become the Comendador for the encomienda of Montemolin in the Order of Santiago. Viceroy Velasco replied enthusiastically looking forward to the arrival of his younger son.¹⁹ Young Luis sailed to New

¹⁷ AHN, Órdenes Militares, Lib. 57-C, f. 477. Velasco finally received permission in 1576 to take his spiritual retreat at an Augustinian monastery in Mexico rather than Uclés, and the king waived the service on the galleys in recognition of Velasco's loyalty to the crown.

¹⁸ AHN, Órdenes Militares, Lib. 124-C, f. 289. The paper work for these permissions was begun in 1577, but the documentation indicates that the final royal decree was never issued. AHN, Órdenes Militares, Lib. 58-C, f. 94, Lib. 120-C, f. 77. It is possible that the permission were issued in 1577 and the 1612 permission refers to another Luis de Velasco.

¹⁹ Herbert I. Priestly, *The Luna Papers*, 2 v. (DeLand FL, 1928), I, 74-75. (From AGI, 51-6-10/27 old style).

Spain on the ship of Miguel de Oquendo, along with 6 retainers, in January 1560, arriving in Veracruz on Palm Sunday, 1560. Accompanying him were Pedro de Carrión, Juan Bautista, Luis de Salinas, Francisco Ramírez, Cristóbal de Mata, and Alonso de Velasco.²⁰

The traditional view has been that Velasco, the younger, first traveled to New Spain with his father. The evidence does not support this contention, especially since both Luis, the elder, and his wife, Ana, were actively soliciting a royal pension for their son, who they described as attending Salamanca. There was no mention of the younger Luis in the records of the voyage taken by his father to New Spain.²¹ The elder Luis never mentioned his younger son being in New Spain in his correspondence, while references to the presence of his own brother, Francisco de Velasco, abound. Once the young Luis arrived, as will be seen later, there are numerous references to him in the official correspondence. Consequently it is extremely unlikely that Luis de Velasco, the younger, lived in New Spain prior to 1560. All of the evidence points to him having remained in Europe. Later evidence also tends to confirm this assumption. When Velasco's own his son began the entrance process to become a member of the Order of Santiago, witnesses agreed that the younger Luis de Velasco had arrived in New Spain in about 1560.²²

Shortly after Luis de Velasco, the younger, arrived in New Spain, his sister, cousin, and several members of the Ibarra clan and their retainers made preparations to sail. Luis' sister, Ana de Velasco, was betrothed to Diego de Ibarra, one of the wealthiest men in all of New Spain, a miner and one of the founders of the mines of Zacatecas. Ana and her entourage sailed from Seville in May 1561. The full entourage, a group of 29, sailed on the ship of Pedro Menéndez Márquez.²³ The group consisted of 10 maids and other retainers for Ana; Rodrigo de Vivero, her cousin, and his personal servant; Ortuño de Ibarra, *factor* and *veedor* for the Royal Treasury in Mexico and his 8 servants; and the priest Francisco Abad de Ibarra, the brother of Diego de Ibarra, and his one servant.

²⁰ *Pasajeros a Indias*, v. IV, Madrid, 1980, p. 43. AGI, Contratación, 5104; Contratación, 5537, II, f. 80v.

²¹ AGI, Contratación, 5103.

²² AHN, Órdenes Militares, Santiago, 8681, Prueba de Francisco de Velasco, 29 May 1574.

²³ *Pasajeros*, v. IV, 180-192. Archivo General de la Nación en México (en adelante AGN), Contratación, 5537, v. II, f. 171v-176v.

When Luis finally arrived in New Spain in the spring of 1560, he joined his father in the viceregal palace. His father was not the only immediate family member in New Spain. His uncle, Francisco de Velasco, was an important member of the viceroy's household. The relationship among these three men was very important. The elder Luis clearly relied heavily on his brother in his government. Comments about Francisco while not common are by no means absent in the correspondence of the viceroy to the crown. The other major topic, already seen above, is the concern which Luis, the elder, had for his wife and children in Spain, and the relative poverty he suffered as viceroy.

The correspondence with the crown reveals that the elder Velasco had a plan concerning improving the financial condition of his brother. In early 1551, Velasco wrote the King discussing a matter relevant to the inheritance of *encomiendas*. He presented the curious case of Marina, the native interpreter of Cortés, who had borne at least one child by the conqueror. Cortés had arranged that she marry a comrade in arms, Juan de Jaramillo, and that the couple receive the populous region of Jilotepec in *encomienda*. Jaramillo and Marina had a daughter, María Jaramillo, who married Luis Quesada. Upon the death of Marina, Jaramillo remarried, this time to Beatriz de Andrade. Beatriz was the daughter of the Comendador Leonel de Cervantes, one of the first conquerors. Jaramillo and Andrade never had children, so when Jaramillo died before 1551, both Beatriz and Luis de Quesada, her putative son-in-law, petitioned the court for possession of the grant. Nevertheless, it also seems that there was a prior agreement between Quesada and Andrade that Quesada would receive one-third of the grant upon the death of Jaramillo, with the bulk passing to Andrade. Consequently, Velasco sought clarification before he either admitted the prior agreement, or proceeded with his own decision.²⁴

The issue was an important one, because the general rule regarding the inheritance of *encomiendas* was to favor a spouse over a child. After the New Laws placed limitations on the number of times an *encomienda* could be inherited, the lives of spouses were considered as a single life. Based on these principles, because there was a continuous line of matrimony, the initial grant to Marina and

²⁴ Archivo del Duque del Infantado en Madrid, Papeles de la Nueva España, Lib. 10, 6v-7.

Jaramillo was considered still in the first life, since Jaramillo had married Andrade, and if she were to marry, as she did, that life would extend to include both her and the new spouse.²⁵ The suit was eventually resolved along the lines the two parties had already outlined with some slight differences. María Jaramillo and Luis Quesada received one-half of the *encomienda*, with the rest going to Beatriz.²⁶ This action made Beatriz one of the richest women in New Spain. This fact was not lost on Luis de Velasco, the elder. In July of 1551 he wrote to the crown requesting permission for his brother, Francisco de Velasco, to marry Beatriz and to receive royal confirmation of his rights, as lawful spouse, over the *encomienda*.²⁷ The crown granted the permission to marry but the legal claim to the *encomienda* remained in the hands of Beatriz.

The marriage of Francisco de Velasco to Beatriz de Andrade not only provided the viceroy's brother with a significant income, it also tied the Velasco family by marriage to one of the more powerful creole clans in sixteenth century Mexico. As noted earlier, Beatriz was the daughter of Leonel de Cervantes. The scion of an important Seville family, he successfully married his daughters to comrades in arms and important early government officials. (See Chart V, Cervantes Family) Another daughter of Leonel de Cervantes, Luisa de Lara, married her first cousin once removed, the royal treasury official Juan de Cervantes. This marriage resulted in no less than twelve children, including the *regidor* Alonso Gómez de Cervantes and the *alcalde* Lucas de Lara (for 1599). Isabel de Lara married a conqueror Alonso de Aguilar. Catalina de Cervantes married yet another conqueror, Juan de Villaseñor y Orozco and settled in Michoacán. Ana seems to have married Alonso de Villanueva. María reportedly married Pedro de Ircio, conqueror brother of the conqueror Martín de Ircio. Ircio died shortly after the conquest, and María does not seem to have remarried. Leonel de Cervantes' son, Juan Alonso de Cervantes, married Catalina de Zárate, but seems

²⁵ *Recopilación de Leyes de Indias*, lib. VI, tit. XI.

²⁶ Silvio Zavala, *Libros de asientos de la gobernación de la Nueva España. Periodo del virrey Luis de Velasco, 1550-1552*, México, Archivo General de la Nación, 1982, p. 18-19. Francisco del Paso y Troncoso, *op. cit.*, p. 8, 28. Although as late as 1554 Velasco, the elder, still discusses the suit in various letters, such as one to the Duque de Alba, 10 March 1554, Archivo del Duque del Infantado, Papeles de la Nueva España, 10, f. 130-131.

²⁷ Archivo del Duque del Infantado, Papeles de la Nueva España, v. 10, f. 31v-32, 20 July 1551.

to have died without issue before 1550. Because of the early death of Juan Alonso, the various *encomiendas* which Leonel enjoyed passed upon his death to his eldest daughter, Luisa de Lara and Juan de Cervantes.²⁸

The group of people who descend from the marriages of Luisa, Isabel, Ana, and Catalina form the core of the Cervantes clan. This group of individuals was quite numerous. As noted Luisa had twelve children, all of whom lived to adulthood. Alonso de Aguilar and Isabel had seventeen children, of whom only eight lived to adulthood, yet they also raised three of their nieces and nephews.²⁹ Catalina her husband had five children after sixteen years of marriage.³⁰ Pedro de Ircio and María had only one child, since Pedro died by 1526.³¹ Pedro's brother, Martina, will reappear in the Velasco family history shortly. The evidence indicates that Juan Alonso de Cervantes had no children, and certainly no son who would have inherited the *encomienda*.

As a result of the marriage of Francisco and Beatriz, when young Luis de Velasco arrived in Mexico, in 1560, he already enjoyed a considerable extended family. Yet his sister had been betrothed to Diego de Ibarra, as already noted. Ibarra was without doubt the wealthiest man in New Spain, having been the discovered and principal miner in Zacatecas. Ibarra came from an hidalgo family in Spain. Originally from the village of Eibar in Guipuzcoa, in the Basque country, Ibarra had served in the household of the Constables of Castile, before going out to New Spain. His father, licenciado Francisco Pérez de Ibarra, had been a magistrate for the Constable.³² By virtue of his wealth from the Zacatecas silver mines, Ibarra had created a large following for himself and was without question the most powerful man in northern New Spain. Thanks to his sister's betrothal and marriage, Luis de Velasco, the younger,

²⁸ John Frederick Schwaller, "Tres familias mexicanas del siglo XVI", *Historia Mexicana*, v. 31 (1981), p. 182-190; AGI, Patronato, 62, ramos 1 & 4; AGI, Patronato, 66, n. 2, ramos 1 & 10; AGI, Patronato, n. 2, ramo 1.

²⁹ AGI, Patronato, 63, n. 1, ramo 8.

³⁰ Francisco de Icaza, *Diccionario de los Conquistadores de la Nueva España*, 2 v., Madrid, Imprenta de "El Adelantado de Segovia", 1923, I, p. 188-189, #367.

³¹ AGI, Patronato, 77, n. 1, ramo 2, Información por parte de Martín de Ircio por su hermano Pedro, como albacea del 28 September 1530.

³² AHN, Santiago, 4042, Diego de Ibarra, 1561; Guillermo Porras Muñoz, "Diego de Ibarra y la Nueva España", *Estudios de Historia Novohispana*, n. 2, 1968, p. 49-78; José Ignacio Rubio Mañé, "Traslado de los restos mortales del virrey Luis de Velasco, el viejo, 1594," *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación*, 2a. serie, n. 8, p. 29-45.

encountered himself linked to another extended family of some repute and power.

There were others in New Spain at the time of Velasco's arrival who also claimed kinship to him. Among these were members of the Castilla family. When Luis de Velasco, the elder, first arrived in New Spain he brought his wife's uncle, Pedro de Castilla along with him.³³ In Mexico there already were other relatives from the Castilla clan. Most important among these was Luis de Castilla, a third cousin of Ana de Castilla, the wife of Luis de Velasco, the elder.³⁴ Although the relationship was distant in terms of modern notions of kinship, they shared a common great-grandfather, Bishop Pedro de Castilla, it was close enough in sixteenth-century terms to raise some eyebrows when the viceroy granted various privileges to Castilla.

Luis de Castilla came to New Spain as a member of Cortés' retinue when the latter returned as marqués del Valle. He took possession of a seat on the cabildo as *regidor* in 1534. After serving the office for nearly 45 years, Luis requested permission to renounce the post in favor of his grandson, Luis Felipe de Castilla. He formally did so in 1573, and the municipal council recommended royal approval in 1574. Luis Felipe took possession of the seat in 1576. During the time that Luis de Castilla was serving on the council, his eldest son, the father of Luis Felipe, Pedro Lorenzo, also received a royal appointment in 1559 as *regidor*, filling the vacancy created with the death of Alonso de Villanueva. Thus, for four decades a father-son combination from the Castilla family held seats on the council. Eventually, Pedro Lorenzo renounced his seat in favor of his son in 1600, and so Luis Felipe came back on the council.³⁵

The Castilla family was as well connected to the elite of New Spain as was the Cervantes clan. Luis de Castilla married Juana de Sosa, the sister of the first important royal treasury officer in Mexico, Juan Alonso de Sosa. Pedro Lorenzo married Catalina de Cháves, the daughter of the conqueror Francisco de Cháves. Both Luis and Pedro Lorenzo were members of the prestigious military religious order of Santiago, some of the few members in early colonial Mexico.

³³ Archivo del Duque del Infantado, Papeles de la Nueva España, 10, f. 128, Velasco to Marqués de Mondéjar, 30 Jan. 1551.

³⁴ AHN, Santiago, 1737, Luis de Castilla, 13 March 1534. AHN, Santiago, 8661, Luis de Velasco, 1559.

³⁵ AGI, México, 102, ramo 3, n. 22; AGI, México, 110, ramo 1, n. 7.

As with other early families, especially the Cervantes clan, the daughters of Luis de Castilla married well. The three of the daughters found mates from within the early settler conqueror elite. Francisca Osorio de Castilla married Hernán Gutiérrez Altamirano, the son of Cortés' majordomo; Luisa de Castilla married Bernardino Vázquez de Tapia, a famous conqueror; and another sister married her cousin Lope de Sosa, son of Juan Alonso de Sosa, the early treasury officer. The Velasco and Castilla families came together again when the daughter of Luis de Velasco, the younger, married the son of Francisca de Castilla and Hernán Gutiérrez Altamirano, in 1590.

It was thus that young Luis de Velasco arrived in 1560 into a network of family. His father had been preparing for his arrival for some time. He mentioned the imminent arrival of his son in several letters back to court. Just before young Luis arrived in Mexico, the viceroy had sent out an expedition to pacify Florida under the command of Tristán de Luna y Arrellano. In an early letter the viceroy, Luis, the elder, to the commander demonstrated his full confidence in the expedition by promising to send his own son, Luis, the younger, along, as soon as he arrived in New Spain, should it prove necessary, an offer he repeated even after his son's arrival.³⁶ Later, long after young Luis' arrival, his father again pledged to send his son on an important expedition, this time to the Philippines in the voyage under the command of Melchor López de Legaspi.³⁷ Similarly, the elder Luis volunteered his son's skills for the pacification of the northern territories being carried out by his son-in-law, Diego de Ibarra. In 1563 when Ibarra, and Francisco de Ibarra, his kinsman, were engaged in warfare with the nomadic northern tribes, Velasco, the elder, wrote to the King that we was willing to send young Luis to assist.³⁸ As it turns out, later in his career, young Luis would take command of an army in the pacification of the northern frontier.

Finding a suitable mate for young Luis was also an important issue on his father's agenda. Some of the viceroy's critics complained to the crown about the viceregal matchmaking. They al-

³⁶ Herbert I. Priestly, *The Luna Papers*, 2 v., DeLand, Florida, Florida Historical Society, 1928, 1, p. 74-75, 122-125.

³⁷ *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista, y colonización de las antiguas posesiones españolas en América y Oceanía*, 2a. serie, v. 2, p. 143, Velasco to King, 25 February 1564.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1a. serie, 14, p. 555.

ready had reason to complain because of the marriage of the brother of the viceroy to one of the wealthiest widows. Soon the betrothal and marriage of the viceroy's daughter to one of the wealthiest colonists would also raise the ire of some. One of the individuals identified as a potential spouse for young Luis was the daughter of Alonso de Villaseca.³⁹ Villaseca was one of the richest men of the colony. According to the critics his total wealth came to some 400 000 ducats. According to another contemporary observer, Villaseca was worth a million pesos.⁴⁰ Unlike Ibarra who gained wealth from mines, or others who achieved wealth thanks to the conquest, Villaseca became rich in the cacao trade. Yet in the end, young Luis did not marry his daughter.

While his father continued to govern as viceroy, and search for a bride for young Luis, the son lived in the viceregal palace. He was not the only young person residing there. Carlos de Luna y Arrellano, whose father was engaged in the pacification of Florida, also lived in the viceregal residence. The two young men seem to have been of a similar age, and seem to have become close friends as a result of their living under the same roof.⁴¹ At this time Luis also seems to have made friends with Luis de Marín, a musician. Although how the two met and the exact nature of their friendship is unknown, contemporaries commented on it.⁴² Another member of young Velasco's circle might have been Martín de Salinas, a member of his uncle's household. Rumor had it that Salinas was the elder Velasco's illegitimate child.⁴³

The search for a bride lasted until just before the death of the viceroy. Although it is not clear exactly when young Luis married, several bits of evidence can be brought to bear on the issue. In the

³⁹ AGI, México, 68, ramo 2, Dr. Vasco de Puga to King, 20 May 1560.

⁴⁰ Juan Suárez de Peralta, *Tratado del descubrimiento de las Indias*, México, Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1949, p. 97.

⁴¹ Priestly, *op. cit.*, I, p. 132-133. Velasco, the elder, refers on several occasions to Carlos living in the viceregal residence. At least twice, however, he refers to him as Luis, obviously confusing him for his own son. There also is some confusion as to Carlos's age. At one point Velasco, the elder, suggests that he is only 8 years old, *Ibid.*, p. 124-125. He also comments frequently about how much the boy has grown, which implies that he probably was not yet in his late teens.

⁴² France V. Scholes and Eleanor B. Adams, *Cartas del Licenciado Jerónimo Valderrama (1563-1565)*, México, José Porrúa e Hijos, 1961, p. 213.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 224, 244. It is unclear if this is the person, or whether Luis de Salinas, a member of the younger Velasco's entourage, was the actual person. The surname Salinas refers to the town over which the Velasco's were local lords, Salinas del Pisuegra.

final years of the rule of Luis, the elder, a visitador was conducting an in-depth investigation into his government. The investigator, licenciado Jerónimo de Valderrama, member of the Royal and Supreme Council of the Indies, carried on his study of the viceregal government from his arrival on the last day of July 1563, until his departure in the waning days of 1565. One of the areas of the investigation centered on charges that Velasco, the elder, lacked the objectivity necessary to rule, being related by blood and marriage to many of the leading members of the Mexican society. Moreover, his detractors claimed that he had showered seemingly endless favors on his dependents and sycophants. Consequently, Valderrama focused a great deal of his attention on these relationships.

The evidence collected by Valderrama documented Velasco's ties to his brother, and his brother's wife's family, Velasco's ties to his cousin and nephew (the Viveros), to various second-cousins, persons related to his wife's family (the Castillas), and his daughter's family by marriage (the Ibarra). Nevertheless, no evidence pointed to young Luis having married, nor even having contracted marriage.⁴⁴ The strongest documentation regarding young Luis' marriage, however, dates from around 1564, which can provide a *terminus a quo*. Clearly, young Luis had entered into matrimony by about 1566, since his eldest child, a son, Francisco de Velasco, named after his beloved uncle, was born by that time.⁴⁵ Consequently, this would tend to put his marriage some time in 1565.

Unfortunately, the timing of his marriage was also closely related to a family tragedy. One of the truly striking events in the life of young Luis de Velasco was the death of his father on July 31, 1564, exactly one year after the Valderrama investigation had begun. The information contained in his last will and testament, dated July 16, 1564, with a codicil dated July 27, provides some glimpses into the marital state of young Luis. In the will, the viceroy requested that his brother, Francisco, supervise the wedding of young Luis and his betrothed, and provided an annual stipend of 2 000 ducats to his son upon the occasion of the marriage, since all the details of the marriage had been arranged by the time of his death. Among the viceroy's other debts were 10 000 ducats for the dowry of his daughter, Ana de Velasco, wife of Diego de Ibarra, and various debts to the

⁴⁴ Scholes and Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 229-233.

⁴⁵ AHN, Órdenes, Santiago, exp. 8681, Francisco de Velasco, México, 29 May 1575.

Royal Treasury in the amount of approximately 18 000 ducats consisting of advances on his salary and other royal grants.⁴⁶

Through this analysis, one can conclude that Luis de Velasco, the younger, must have married in late 1564 or early 1565. The lady selected was María de Ircio, also known as María Dircio. She was related to both the Spanish nobility and to the *encomendero* elite of New Spain, consequently a seemingly perfect match. On the one hand, María's mother, María de Mendoza, was the illegitimate sister of the first viceroy of Mexico, Antonio de Mendoza. On the other hand, María's father was Martín de Ircio, one of the first conquerors of Mexico and a well-to-do *encomendero*.

The Mendoza family was not unaccustomed to illegitimate children. In fact in one branch the noble title passed for several generations to illegitimate offspring of the title holder. As noted, María de Mendoza was a half-sister to the Viceroy Mendoza. Their father was the Second Count of Tendilla, First Marquis of Mondéjar, Íñigo López de Mendoza. Antonio's mother was Francisca Pacheco y Portocarrero. On the other hand María de Mendoza's mother was María Carvajal also known as Leonor Beltrán de Carvajal.⁴⁷

The Ircio family lacked the high social status of the Mendoza's but they enjoyed wealth and prominence in Mexican society. Martín de Ircio was one of two brothers involved in the conquest. Martín and Pedro de Ircio, already seen because of his marriage to María de Cervantes, arrived in New Spain in the Narváez expedition, sent out from Cuba to arrest Cortés and stop his conquest of the Mexica. Nevertheless, the Ircio brothers sided with Cortés in the end, and went on to become important figures. Pedro rose to some prominence in the conquering army, but died shortly after the conquest, in 1527. Martín became the executor of his estate and his universal heir, and thus reaped the benefits not only of his own participation in the conquest, but of his brother as well.⁴⁸ The Ircio brothers belonged to the petty nobility. Their hometown was Briones in the province of La Rioja, Logroño, in Spain. Their parents were Pedro

⁴⁶ Velasco's will is found in: J. Ignacio Rubio Mañé, "Apuntes para la biografía de Luis de Velasco", *Revista de Historia de América*, v. 13, 1941, p. 77-99; Sarabia Viejo, *op. cit.*, 472-73.

⁴⁷ Helen Nader, *The Mendoza Family in the Spanish Renaissance, 1350-1550*, New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 1979, p. 121. AHN, Órdenes, Santiago, 8681, Francisco de Velasco, México, 29 May 1575.

⁴⁸ Víctor M. Álvarez, *Diccionario de conquistadores*, 2 v., México, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1975), v. 1, p. 159-162.

Sánchez de Ircio and María Jiménez de Ribafrecha.⁴⁹ Pedro married María de Cervantes, the daughter of the Comendador Leonel de Cervantes, seen earlier.

Martín de Ircio, young Luis de Velasco's father-in-law, held several *encomiendas*. The most important of these were Oapa, Tistla, Huitziltepec, and Muchtitlan, all south of Mexico. Tistla seems to have been the most lucrative of these grants. A significant portion of Ircio's possessions went to form the dowry he provided for his daughter in her marriage to young Luis. Martín died some time before 1565, about the time of his daughter's marriage. Ircio's dowry for his daughter would become a source of friction between Luis and his mother-in-law, as each claimed a significant portion of Ircio's estate.

Martín and María's other daughter, Leonor de Ircio, married Carlos de Luna y Arellano, the companion of young Luis while the former's father was pacifying Florida. Eventually, María de Mendoza also brought suits against her other son-in-law. Unfortunately for Carlos, Leonor died within a few years of their marriage. In the wake of that death, Carlos moved to Spain and eventually remarried María de la Cueva, one of the ladies in waiting to the Queen.⁵⁰

Luis de Velasco, the elder, died in 1564, as noted. During the last years of his father's life, young Luis made friends, established himself in society, and became in many ways the man he was to be for the rest of his life. Shortly after his father's death, he began to petition the crown for a pension, in light of his father's service. The heirs of high court justices always sought pensions from the crown, but few ever gained them. Heirs of viceroys belonged to a different category, since by definition they came from the Spanish nobility, they frequently had close ties to court. Velasco made his request to the king on the basis of two points. On the one hand his father had served the crown long and well, dying in its service. On the other, he himself was married to a descendent of a first conqueror of Mexico. Consequently, he also sought the pension on the grounds of the service to the crown of his father-in-law, who had also died by this time. In 1565 the crown granted him a 6 000 ducat pension, in perpetuity.⁵¹ This grant is unique in that it was inheritable. Most grants contin-

⁴⁹ Robert Himmerich y Valencia, *The Encomenderos of New Spain, 1521-1555*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991, p. 177.

⁵⁰ AGI, Patronato, n. 4, ramo 15.

⁵¹ AGI, México, 242, f. 42-42v.

ued only for the life of the recipient. In the royal decree the crown stipulated no ending point for the grant.

Pensions could be drawn on any of a number of royal accounts, depending on which was stipulated in the original grant. For the recipient it was very important to have a pension or grant drawn on an account that regularly had money. The crown frequently made gifts to subjects on accounts with no funds. The recipients then had no recourse unless funds happened to enter into that account. In Velasco's case, his pension was drawn on the account of vacant *encomiendas*. In keeping with the New Laws, as conquerors died without heirs, the *encomiendas* they held would pass to the crown. While the New Laws originally prohibited the inheritance of *encomiendas*, later revisions eventually allowed first one generation, then two, for a total of three lives.

Most persons who received a grant on vacant *encomiendas* ("indios que vacaren"), especially later in the sixteenth century, would never see a peso. The crown routinely granted more pensions than the account ever could fund. But in Velasco's case, the crown also provided that since Ircio had died, Velasco could claim the pension from the *encomiendas* of his father-in-law, or other *encomiendas* that had passed to the crown, to make a total of 6 000 ducats.

Granting the Ircio *encomiendas* to Velasco violated the inheritance rights of Ircio's widow, Velasco's mother-in-law, María de Mendoza. In 1569, Mendoza sent a long petition, *cum* diatribe, to the crown seeking to have the grants to Velasco overturned as well as seeking royal intervention in various suits she had raised against her son-in-law.⁵² According to the rules regarding the inheritance of *encomiendas*, Mendoza should have been able to either enjoy the full fruits of the grant for the rest of her life, since the life of a husband and wife were considered a single unit in counting the number of times an *encomienda* could be inherited. At the same time, the high courts and the crown had also recognized the rights of adult children, and frequently would split proceeds of *encomiendas* between widows and eldest children, if the grant could be inherited.⁵³

⁵² AGI, México, 168, Doña María de Mendoza to King, 7 AP. 1569; Francisco del Paso y Troncoso, *Papeles de la Nueva España*, 16 v., México, Antigua Librería Robredo de José Porrúa e Hijos, 1939-1942, v. 10, p. 292-308.

⁵³ Silvio A. Zavala, *La encomienda indiana*, second revised and augmented edition, México, Editorial Porrúa, 1973, p. 182-186.

One of the events that would eventually change Velasco's life forever was the arrival of Martín Cortés, the son of Hernán Cortés, to Mexico, the second Marqués del Valle. The son of the conqueror arrived in New Spain in late 1562, or very early in 1563. The young Velasco and Martín Cortés had much in common. Both had journeyed to England in the company of Philip, the Prince of Asturias, upon the occasion of his marriage. Both had been raised within the ranks of the Castilian nobility, and both were members of the military-religious order of Santiago. When word arrived that Martín was travelling to Mexico to take possession of his father's estates, many of the conquerors and their descendants celebrated openly. Velasco, the younger, through his uncle, and his own eventual marriage, was related to this group, and had sympathies with many of their interests. Velasco, viceroy and son, prepared to receive Cortés in a manner befitting a marquis.⁵⁴ In fact when the marquis arrived in 1563, the viceroy dispatched his son to accompany Cortés from the coast up to Mexico. The entourage had actually landed at Campeche a few months earlier. Upon reaching the mainland the marchioness, Ana Ramírez de Arellano, gave birth to the couple's second son, Jerónimo. The entourage then remained in Campeche for three months during the recuperation of the marchioness.⁵⁵

New Spanish society, especially the upper reaches, divided along at least one major fault line. In general holders of *encomiendas*, or those who had lost *encomiendas*, harbored great resentment against the royal government in general and the viceroy in particular. The responsibility of enforcing the provisions of the New Laws had fallen to Luis de Velasco, the elder. Viceroy Mendoza had refused to enact many of the original provisions of the laws, but Velasco had thrown his support behind them, in their revised form.⁵⁶ This had caused deep antagonism towards the viceroy, especially among those who had lost *encomiendas*, or who were on the verge of losing them, as well as among those who wished to have one, but had never successfully gained one. Consequently,

⁵⁴ Juan Suárez de Peralta, *Tratado del descubrimiento de las Yndias y su conquista*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 1990, p. 185.

⁵⁵ Rita Goldberg, "Nuevos datos sobre Martín Cortés, II Marqués del Valle de Oaxaca", *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación*, México, v. 9, n. 3-4, p. 331. Suárez de Peralta, *op. cit.*, p. 185, merely notes that the entourage stopped in Yucatan for the birth of the child, Jerónimo.

⁵⁶ Lesley B. Simpson, *The Encomienda in New Spain: The Beginning of Spanish Mexico*, revised and enlarged edition, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1966, p. 147.

many of the conquerors and early settlers viewed Velasco as an enemy. On the other hand, the natives generally had high regard for the viceroy, although that too was not universal. He had made a public commitment to improving the treatment of the natives. He became a close ally of the religious orders in their efforts to lessen the oppression of the natives. These acts too had important political ramifications.

The *visita* of Valderrama added yet another variable to the political mix in Mexico. The *encomenderos* and those interested in rolling back the most egregious aspects of the New Laws sought to win Valderrama to their opinion. The supporters of the viceroy saw a threat in Valderrama, since his specific charge was to investigate the royal government of New Spain, of which the viceroy was the most obvious component. Lastly, Martín Cortés played an important role by becoming a visible figurehead around whom the disgruntled *encomenderos* could rally.

Cortés offered hospitality to Valderrama, and the visitador took up residence in the marquis' palace in central Mexico City. This raised more than a few eyebrows. Valderrama had been instructed to live in the *casas reales*, the new royal offices and residence for royal officials, but upon his arrival these were not yet finished, so the only other option would have been to live in the viceroy's residence. Valderrama felt that such a move would undermine his objectivity in investigating Velasco.⁵⁷ While complex, the factions in New Spain began to resolve into two major camps. On the one hand many of the old conquerors and *encomenderos* rallied to support Cortés as a figurehead. Valderrama also came to see Cortés as an ally in his investigation of the royal government. In fact Valderrama appointed him as the *alguacil mayor* of Mexico City during the period of the investigation. On the other hand, the religious orders, a more limited group of *encomenderos*, and many of the miners and merchants, came to be allied with Velasco and the royal government.

Viceroy Velasco died in the midst of the Valderrama investigation. This event sent shock waves through the colony because it created a power vacuum. Under normal circumstances the *Audiencia* would assume the viceregal duties until the crown could appoint a new person. But due to the Valderrama *visita*, several of the *oidores*

⁵⁷ Scholes and Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

had been either indicted or removed from office and the court itself fell under suspicion for its assumed failure to vigorously enforce the royal will.⁵⁸ As a result, real uncertainty gripped the colony with regard to authority. Within a month of the viceroy's death, a contingent of *encomenderos* and others petitioned the crown to make Valderrama the president of the *Audiencia*, and *de facto* ruler of the territory, and make Cortés the captain general, giving him what limited military authority the colony possessed.⁵⁹

While the accounts conflict, Cortés began to manifest his power more openly. His wealth lay in the estates granted to his father, with an annual income, estimates vary, of approximately 75 000 pesos. Beyond this, as noted, for many of the *encomenderos*, conquerors and their descendants, he was a tangible tie to the conquest, and a manifestation of their hope of recognition and remuneration for their services. He had been openly confrontational with Velasco during the viceroy's life. He greeted Valderrama before the official welcoming party, and thus also accompanied the royal agent into the city. Cortés had a page precede him when he walked through the streets, had servants dressed in livery, traveled by sedan chair to church, and kept an open house, entertaining his friends and retainers. In short he played the role of *grande* for New Spanish society. Both Velasco and Cortés wrote numerous letters to the crown complaining of the acts of the other. Once the viceroy died, few checks remained to control the marquis' behavior.

Cortés' behavior continued to concern some members of the royal government. When the *visitador* Valderrama departed New Spain in March 1566, the judges of the *Audiencia* worried that the marquis was at the center of a conspiracy to overthrow royal government in Mexico. While early efforts to confirm the rumor reached no conclusion, finally in April 1566, three leading colonists reported that a conspiracy was in fact underway. The central informant was none other than Luis de Velasco, the younger.

⁵⁸ Valderrama removed oidores Luis de Villanueva Zapata and Vasco de Puga within the first months of the visit, prior to Velasco's death. Puga and Villanueva eventually appealed to the Council of the Indies. The Council eventually reinstated them to his post. Alonso de Zorita, another member of the court, resigned in the midst of the investigation and sailed for Spain. Ralph H. Vigil, *Alonso de Zorita: Royal Judge and Christian Humanist, 1512-1585*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1987, p. 226-227, 233.

⁵⁹ Edmundo O'Gorman, *Guía de las actas del cabildo de la ciudad de México*, México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1970, p. 411, item 2887, 31 August 1564.

During Valderrama's residence in Mexico, Cortés became increasingly haughty in his behavior. Prior to his death, Viceroy Velasco had complained to the crown about Cortés. As a result of this the Council of the Indies initiated direct action against Cortés. One decree prohibited him from discussing the issue of making *encomiendas* perpetual, that is to rescind provisions of the New Laws limiting inheritance. The Council further ordered Cortés to formally reply to a whole series of accusations made against him by Viceroy Velasco, mostly relating to Cortés alleged interference with the Valderrama investigation. Failure to reply would result in the possible loss of his estates in New Spain.⁶⁰ Lastly, the Council ordered Cortés to cease using a personal seal on his correspondence.⁶¹ The seal was approximately the same size as the royal seal used by government officials on their documents. In some of his correspondence, on his coat of arms, on some banners, and especially on the seal, Cortés had styled himself a duke: "*Martinus Cortesus primus hujus dominis Dux Marcio secundus*" (Martín Cortés, first of the name, second ducal marquis).

Cortés continued in his ostentatious lifestyle after Valderrama's departure. The two events that gained the most attention occurred in early 1566. One of Cortés supporters, Alonso de Ávila, staged an elaborate masquerade at the marquis' home. In it Ávila and other companions dressed as natives. Upon arriving at the Cortés home they serenaded him and his family and then offered a floral crown to the marchioness. This was interpreted by observers at the time as a not too veiled suggestion that Cortés take on the crown of New Spain and break away from royal government.⁶² The second incident occurred on June 30, 1566. On the occasion of the baptism of twins recently born to the marquis and marchioness, an elaborate ceremony occurred. An elevated walkway was constructed between the Cortés' house and the cathedral. Tapestries and banners hung from it, displaying the marquis' coat of arms. A great retinue of local notables

⁶⁰ One of the major points of friction between Cortés and Viceroy Velasco was the issue of how many vassals lived on the Cortés estates. The crown had insisted on a fair and complete census to assure that the revenues to Cortés were appropriate given the conditions of the original grant. Cortés argued that the estate was a geographical grant not a grant of population. In fact the population was far in excess of what was stipulated in the initial grant.

⁶¹ Manuel Orozco y Berra, *Noticia histórica de la conjuración de Marqués del Valle*, México, Tipografía de R. Rafael, 1853, p. 34-36. Victoria A. Vincent, "The Ávila-Cortés Conspiracy: Creole Aspirations and Royal Interests", unpublished dissertation, Lincoln, University of Nebraska, 1993, p. 130-131.

⁶² Orozco y Berra, *op. cit.*, p. 37-39.

accompanied the infants to the cathedral and amidst cannon fire the infants were borne back to their home. Following the baptism the marquis staged extravagant festivities. These included mock battles and a lavish dinner, including a whole roasted bull. The marquis even constructed a small forest in the plaza between his house and the cathedral containing rabbits, deer, and many other wild animals. The guests then proceeded to carry out a hunt, there in the center of the city. This was followed by more feasting and celebrations. During these celebrations, the word came out that Cortés would not oppose a rebellion. The degree to which the marquis actually encouraged the conspirators, however, is still much in debate.⁶³

Although the marquis may not have actively assisted the conspirators, he did know of their plans, although perhaps not in detail. As early as the death of Viceroy Velasco, rumors had begun of a possible uprising against the royal government. The departure of Valderrama intensified those rumors. Finally by the summer of 1566 at least some colonists were ready to act. Luis de Velasco, and others, testified to the *Audiencia* that Alonso de Ávila, and his brother, Gil González de Ávila, were at the center of a conspiracy to overthrow the crown. Also implicated directly were the dean of the cathedral chapter, Alonso Chico de Molina, Luis de Castilla, Pedro Lorenzo de Castilla, and many others. The *Audiencia* took immediate action and arrested the Ávila brothers, placed dozens others under arrest, including Martín Cortés. The central witness to the conspiracy was Luis de Velasco, the younger. His testimony was corroborated by many other people, including his uncle, Francisco de Velasco, Sancho Sánchez de Muñón (the *maestrescuelas* of the cathedral), Agustín de Villanueva, Baltasar and Pedro de Aguilar, and Alonso de Villanueva Cervantes. These witnesses represented a broad cross section of New Spanish society.

The result of the investigation into the conspiracy by the *oidores* of the *Audiencia* was the prompt execution of the Ávila brothers. On July 18, within three weeks of the baptism of Cortés' children, the first arrests occurred. The Ávila brothers were executed on August 3. The trail of the marquis began in September 1566. The process did not come to a conclusion in a normal fashion. The arrival of the new viceroy, Gastón de Peralta, the marquis of Falces, inter-

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 46-47.

rupted the deliberations of the court in October 1566. Falces, recognizing the volatility of the situation and the difficulty inherent in possibly finding Cortés guilty of treason, had the entire case transferred to the Council of the Indies. Falces ordered that Cortés' properties be impounded by royal officers, pending the outcome of the trial. The documentation, and Cortés, left New Spain for Europe in early January 1567. At this same time the last of the conspirators, Gómez de Vitoria, Cristóbal de Oñate, Baltasar, and Pedro de Quesada were executed for their part in the conspiracy.⁶⁴

Once in court, Cortés succeeded in keeping his head, title, and estates, but little else. The crown found him guilty of conspiracy and imposed a monetary fine as well as perpetual exile from the Indies. For Cortés this might have been a blessing in disguise. It removed him from both his source of income, but also a source of temptation if he truly did aspire to be king of those parts.

At the height of the trials of Cortés in Mexico, Luis de Velasco received word of a special recognition that the monarch bestowed on him. One of the honors accorded to Luis, in recognition of the services of his father, was the award of a seat on the Mexico City town council. The royal decree granting the seat carried the date of September 3, 1565, but it was not until October 5, 1566, that Velasco received the decree and presented it to the council in order to take his seat.⁶⁵ His uncle, Francisco de Velasco, also received a seat on the town council approximately a year later (decree dated May 10, 1567, took possession November 5, 1567).⁶⁶

In the wake of the Cortés conspiracy, and his appointment to the city council of Mexico, Velasco entered into the role of a member of the local landed gentry. He maintained a regular presence at council meetings. Nevertheless, he also absented himself from time to time to deal with other matters. From at least July 1568, until early September, he visited his sister and brother-in-law in Zacatecas. Later in September, he played an important role in the municipal celebrations surrounding the arrival of the new viceroy, Martín Enríquez. Experience in the viceregal palace probably also played a role in 1569 when the town council selected him and his

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60-61.

⁶⁵ O'Gorman, *op. cit.*, p. 431; Guillermo Porras Muñoz, *El gobierno de la ciudad de México en el siglo XVI*, México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1982, p. 158.

⁶⁶ O'Gorman, *op. cit.*, p. 446; Porras Muñoz, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

uncle to serve as liaisons between the council and Viceroy Enríquez. In April 1571, he requested an eight month leave of absence from the council in order to visit his estates. Then in March 1572, he sought a two-year leave to return to Spain to take care of important family business.⁶⁷ The complaints levied against him by his mother-in-law might well have played a role in prompting the trip. It became clear that he needed to secure formal confirmation of his possession of his estates, *encomiendas*, and pensions. The only confirmation that would withstand the test of time was royal confirmation, and in order to secure this he needed to personally solicit the king.

For Luis de Velasco, the younger, his return to court was an opportunity to renew old acquaintances, especially with the king Philip II, whom he had not seen for over a decade. As well he made close friends of other important personages in the court. None of these was more important than the royal secretary, Juan de Ibarra, a kinsman of his brother-in-law, Diego de Ibarra. His stay in Spain also had sad aspects. In the dozen years that he had lived in New Spain both his mother and his brother had died in Spain. As a result he became not just an orphan but the heir of his family's wealth and estates. He had been brought up as a younger brother, operating in his older brothers shadow, as in the case of the marriage trip to England. With the death of his older brother he was thrust into the role not only as principal heir of this parents, but as a patriarch of his particular branch of the clan.

Luis de Velasco's residency in Spain would have a long-term effect on the rest of his life. The king augmented the 6000 ducat grant that he had already received to a total of 10000 ducats annually. The king indicated that the increase recognized the exemplary service of Velasco's brother, Antonio de Velasco, to the crown during his short life. Antonio had been a close member of Prince Phillip's retinue and the immediate cause of Luis' trip to England in the royal entourage. The grant similarly noted the death of Velasco's own father and his services to the crown as viceroy. Lastly, the crown requested that the royal officials in Mexico inform him about the true value of the Ircio *encomienda*, to insure that Velasco received the full 10000 ducats rent that he had promised.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ O'Gorman, *op. cit.*, p. 455, 457-458, 463, 481 y 490.

⁶⁸ AGI, México, 1089, f. 348v-349, Cédula, 2 June 1569.

Over the next two years, Velasco fought to assure that he would truly receive the full 10 000 ducats promised by the king. The king issued several more decrees clarifying the original grants. It gave Velasco the opportunity to bequeath the income to his heirs. This was rather uncommon. The Velasco grants emerge as a hybrid between and *encomienda* and a true grant. In fact they resembled *encomiendas* so much that by the end of the sixteenth century most people took them for *encomiendas*. The wording of the grant even implies an *encomienda*: “we order and commend [to you] a *repartimiento* or *repartimientos* of Indians that are worth or whose rent is...”⁶⁹ Lastly, he secured a grant from the king stating that if the rent of the Indians did not reach the necessary level, or that if suitable populations of Indians did not become vacant, the royal treasury officials could immediately begin to pay the pension from the royal treasury.⁷⁰ The other condition imposed was that Velasco reside in New Spain and not leave that territory without specific royal license.

Finally in 1574, Velasco prepared to return to New Spain. He carried several other privileges in his pocket before he left Spain. He could carry 2 000 ducats worth of personal goods to the colony free of duties. The crown allowed him to take a large quantity of military stores with him, including 36 harquebuses, 12 sets of mail, 24 lances, 12 halberds, 48 swords, and 12 suits of armor. The crown dictated that the viceroy give Velasco land, both urban house plots and rural estates.⁷¹ The king granted him the normal letter of recommendation to the viceroy, asking that he receive honors and favors appropriate to his service and station.⁷² Although royal policy had forbidden the direct use of Indians for personal service, moving to a system whereby the natives paid tribute to colonists and provided labor through the organized labor pools of the government, Velasco secured the use of 16 Indians from the village of Tultitlán for his personal service. Tultitlán, located northwest of Mexico City, was the location of the most important of his personal estates.⁷³

Curiously the return of Luis de Velasco to New Spain in 1575 marked the beginning of a fairly rich period of documentation re-

⁶⁹ AGI, México, 1090, f. 178v-179, Cédula, 2 June 1573.

⁷⁰ AGI, México, 1090, f. 258v-259v, Cédula, 23 March 1574.

⁷¹ AGI, México, 1090, f. 269, Cédula, 21 April 1574.

⁷² AGI, México, 1090, f. 269v, Cédula, 27 April 1574.

⁷³ AGI, México, 1090, f. 282v, Cédula, 12 May 1574.

garding his activities in the colony. While in Spain, Philip II had commissioned him to serve as a special secret envoy to New Spain. Velasco was to report on conditions in the colony on a regular basis, directly to the King, through one of the royal secretaries, first Juan de Ledesma, later Juan de Ibarra.⁷⁴ While the crown controlled all travel from Spain to the Indies and back, the king imposed an additional restriction on Velasco, because of his utility in reporting conditions in the colony. Philip forbade Velasco from leaving the New World without his express permission.⁷⁵ Approval of the viceroy and town council were not sufficient. Nearly a score of these personal letters from Velasco to the King survive in Spanish archives. Velasco's return to New Spain was not a completely joyous one. During his absence in Spain his beloved uncle, Francisco de Velasco, had died.⁷⁶ As a result, he found himself as the undisputed head of his family. One sister lived in Spain, another in Zacatecas.

The return of Luis de Velasco to New Spain in 1575 opened a new phase of his life.

He was one of the leading figures of the colony. Grants from the crown, his wife's dowry, and a small inheritance from his uncle had transformed him into potentially one of the wealthiest men in the colony, although from his letters constantly requesting the fulfillment of the royal grant, one would get the idea that he lived close to poverty. He sat on the municipal council of Mexico City and as a result exercised symbolic, if not actual, power. He was one of the few members of the prestigious Order of Santiago resident in New Spain. His sister was married to arguably the richest man in the colony. By marriage he was related to nearly all of the leading families of the colony. Yet as the son of a viceroy and familiar of the king, Velasco bridged two worlds. On the one hand he was a faithful servant of the king and royal government, as manifested in his actions during the Cortés conspiracy. On the other hand, he was an *encomendero* and land owner, whose fortune and success was intimately tied to the land, the natives, and the local economy. His life

⁷⁴ An example of such a letter can be found in: AGI, México, 105, doc. 48, Velasco to Juan de Ledesma, 26 October 1581.

⁷⁵ AGI, México, 106, doc. 74, Velasco to King, 8 November 1582.

⁷⁶ AGI, México, 106, doc. 20, Velasco to President, Council of the Indies, 20 March 1575. The last mention of Francisco in the municipal council records is November 1574. O'Gorman, *op. cit.*, 515.

in Mexico hinged on how well he could balance these often conflicting demands.

While Luis de Velasco did not witness the apparitions of the Virgin of Guadalupe, nor did he travel to Mexico as a small boy in his father's company, yet the reality of his early life was in many ways far more exciting. Destined for a career as a *letrado*, he left the University of Salamanca to join his brother as a member of Philip's entourage for the wedding to Queen Mary. He was inducted into the military-religious order of Santiago by the new King Philip himself, while resident in Brussels. He then traveled to Mexico to join his father. Once in Mexico he became instrumental in discovering and thwarting the Cortés Conspiracy.

By birth, he belonged to an important family within an important clan. His forbears included princes, kings, dukes, and marquises. These same connections had assisted his father in gaining his appointment as viceroy. Yet in New Spain, through the marriage of his uncle and eventually his own marriage he was related to an important cross section of the local elite, as well as to other distant family members who also happened to be in New Spain. His formative years as a young man, entering into marriage, having children, making a life for himself, were spent in New Spain, in spite of his connections and experiences in Spain. Thus as an early colonial figure, Luis de Velasco stands as a unique personage.

He was the son of a viceroy who chose to make his life in the colony his father had served. But perhaps most importantly, he would come to govern that same colony, and Peru, as a viceroy in his own right, eventually becoming President of the Council of the Indies. His later actions would in many ways be predicated on these widely divergent strains within him: the son of an aristocratic family who chose to settle in the colony of New Spain. He truly carried a bit of both worlds within himself.