

milk, cream, and curds. This valley, or rather the Indians and my property, are close to the sea, where the Indians catch a thousand kinds of fish, and have many nets they fish with. And as they like me well, when they have good luck they bring fish to me. I have maize from tributes, and a mill where wheat is ground. And certainly we have very good fare, with the capons they give me as tribute, and the very fat kids and muttons; all is from the harvest and tribute, and praise to God, the excess here could feed all of those boys. I have four pounds of fish and two chickens in tribute daily. In the previous assessment they were obliged to give me 600 bushels of wheat and 500 of maize, but in this assessment that was just made the amounts were reduced by half, because I requested it of the inspector, since if I die, I want them relieved; I have more than enough with the wheat and the maize they give me now.

I have here next to the mill four or five hundred fig trees that yield a harvest of fifty hundred-weight, and there are orange trees and some vines that yield grapes to eat. The Indians here suffer because the river of the valley is so variable, full of water in the winter and empty in the spring, and some years they have scarcity, but since they are fishermen, they get everything they need from the neighboring people in exchange for fish.

I have a farm in Trujillo where I grow wheat to maintain my household, and I have a mill in the middle of it to grind the wheat that is harvested and other wheat that is grown by surrounding neighbors. I have there a dozen Indian couples and two blacks, one of whom watches a flock of goats and sheep to supply the house. But since there are many livestock around the town, the animals are thin, and the milk is less abundant than here. And besides I have in Trujillo two black women who make bread and cook for everyone, and a mulatto woman who serves Ana López, embroidering and sewing and serving at table along with the Indian women and girls. There are five or six other Indian women who are laundresses and help the black women make bread, so that there are twenty or twenty-five people eating there, including the Indian women and boys and blacks serving at the house. I have said this so you will see whether or not I have much to maintain and support. You will ask why I never

wrote this before. I say that since Trujillo causes it all, Trujillo is what I have written about.

Many salutations to milady sister Mari López and the gentlemen your sons. May our Lord give you the desired contentment and repose. From this valley of Casma, 1st of January, 1570.

Your servant,

ANDRÉS CHACÓN

52:8. Poma de Ayala on Indians and *corregidores*.

Though officials were appointed fairly early after the conquest for some Indian districts or repartimientos, it was only in the 1560s that the governor, Castro, systematically appointed corregidores de indios for districts that blanketed the whole country, promulgating a set of ordinances for them to abide by. Though these officials were supposed to protect the Indians from the exploitation of others, including their encomenderos, they soon came to have a corner on the exploitation of the Indians themselves.

Huamán Poma de Ayala Letter to a King (London: Allen & Unwin, 1978) pp. 128-133. Translated by Christopher Dilke.

The so-called *corregidores* or royal administrators can usually count upon making 30,000 pesos in cash out of their term of office, and also upon retiring with an estate worth more than 50,000 pesos. It is their practice to collect Indians into groups and send them to forced labour without wages, while they themselves receive the payment for the work. During their term of office the royal administrators make all sorts of contracts and deals, embezzle public funds and even lay their hands on the royal fifth. They also raise loans from church funds. The Indian chiefs do not protest because they are accomplices in many of the malpractices. They are praised and commended by the administrators, who go about saying, "What a good chief so-and-so is." The chiefs sometimes prefer to keep quiet because they are afraid, or have no intention of losing their position in the community. They are well

aware of how easily they could be dismissed on a trumped-up charge.

The royal administrators and the other Spaniards lord it over the Indians with absolute power. They can commit crimes with impunity because of the support which they can count on from higher authority. All complaint against them is stifled by fear of the consequences.

Of course, administrators exist who commit no crimes and make no enemies, but even these virtuous ones invariably leave office with a well-filled purse. Their good record comes in useful to get them promotion.

There is an opposite case of those who run into debt and are dunned by their creditors. Their expenses become impossible to meet and writs, petitions and complaints rain down upon them until they have to flee from office as poor and naked as on the day they were born. Their plight is due to being uncontrollable gamblers or womanisers, or squandering money on banquets for their Spanish friends.

In order to obtain the post of a royal administrator, ambitious candidates are often prepared to risk their entire fortune. Sometimes they succeed and sometimes not. The appointment is often made in accordance with the merit and record of the candidate, rather than what he has spent in currying favour. Once appointed, all their efforts to obtain the post are forgotten and they accordingly set about maltreating and robbing the Indians. Some of them have already pledged their future to the last peso. In order to become solvent, they have to depopulate their region by hiring out gangs of workers.

One trick which they practise is that of lending money at interest in the name of some other Spaniard. Then, under the pretence of safeguarding the other Spaniard's investment, they initiate legal action to confiscate the debtor's property and keep it for themselves.

The excuse which royal administrators always give for failing to carry out any benevolent instructions from above is that they themselves are poor men and need more money. They take the precaution of explaining their non-compliance with orders by a string of letters to the Royal Audience, the Viceroy and even the King, in which they pass on false information and conceal the true state of affairs.

Legal actions brought against them seldom succeed and in this way they avoid paying debts to the Indians for goods, property and services. Either influence is brought to bear on the judge, or the judge himself is aiming at a similar post and intends to commit precisely the same abuses when he takes over. There is an unwritten pact of silence and hypocrisy between the officials. Whenever they find themselves in financial difficulty they get together and award each other lucrative posts and commissions.

When taxes are being collected, the royal administrators demand more than is actually due, or they confiscate cattle under the pretext of taxation. Meanwhile their underlings simply take whatever they want by force. All such officials are understandably hostile to clever Indians, who have learnt how to read and write and, even worse from the officials' point of view, know how to formulate complaints to higher authority. Indians of this sort are capable of appearing in court and demanding an account of the wrongs and sufferings of their people.

One Indian who dared to oppose the Spanish rulers of his province was Cristóbal de León of the Omapacha tribe of Lucanas. He was one of several Christian pupils of mine who turned out to be clever as well as compassionate towards their fellow-Indians. Except for a certain tendency toward drunkenness, he was capable of matching his wits against any Spaniard. For some time he was able to defend himself against persecution and false accusations made against him. He refused to supply Indians for the transportation of wine from the plains to Cuzco or for making clothes for the Spaniards. Meanwhile other Indian chiefs were allowing their men to be treated like horses or donkeys, while the wives and daughters were kept busy spinning, twisting and weaving, or else debauched.

Cristóbal de León made up his mind to demand justice and set out on the road to Lima, taking his detailed complaints with him. But Father Peralta, a priest whose conduct with girls he had criticised, was warned of his departure and went in pursuit of him with two men. They arrested him and took away his papers. Then Father Peralta had him brought before the royal administrator, a fellow of his own sort, to whom he had lent 2,000 pesos. Between the two of

them, they tortured León and fabricated evidence against him. He was put in the stocks and his property sold.

Even when a new royal administrator took over, Cristóbal de León was still kept in the stocks behind the house and denied any company, even that of his wife and family. His friends among the chiefs did not dare to come forward and defend him because of their fear of the consequences. As a last stroke, his house was burnt down. Finding himself stripped of his possessions and virtually naked, Cristóbal de León gave notice of an appeal. The result was that he was murdered by beheading in 1612.

A protector of Indian rights ought to be appointed by Your Majesty to be present whenever judgement is being passed or administrative decisions of importance being discussed. Such a protector should be immune from any fear of Spanish officials, being solely responsible to the Crown.

In general, Indians and Spaniards ought to lead separate lives, not just in the country but in the cities. At present the Spanish administrators and Indians of noble family sit at the same table, eat and drink and gamble with every sort of buffoon, thief and drunkard. Jews and half-breeds are allowed to join in as well; and of course they pretend to be just as good as the rest. Some of the guests only come as a formality; some want to drink; and others are motivated by fear or the desire to ingratiate themselves, in case they need support on some future occasion.

My own opinion is that people ought to have some sense of their own dignity. The high officials should invite each other to their tables; and the church dignitaries should do the same. Our Indian chiefs should hold gatherings of their own sort; and the Indians of lower rank likewise.

It is proper that one person of quality should entertain another, but this custom should not be confused with charity, which is a demonstration of love for a neighbour. It is an honour for a poor man to entertain his master or employer. And this same consideration applies when a woman of humble birth gives herself to a person of quality without insisting on marriage. Even if she has a bastard son, it is still an honour for her.

Why should there be any disrespect for people of quality? If you happen to be one, you can

recommend yourself to God and his saints and angels, live a quiet family life and end up as a royal administrator with a valuable property in the country.

The good administrator is one who does not surround himself with deputies and officials. He is content with a fat hen for lunch and a chicken for dinner; keeps two horses, two Indian servants and a boy; eats by himself and does not play for money.

52.9. 1586. Geographical description of the city of Huamanga.

Though not as individualistic as some, this is a fine example of the genre of the Relaciones Geográficas drawn up in response to the questionnaires sent out under Philip II. Huamanga was the town now known as Ayacucho, between Lima and Cuzco, and was founded to establish a garrison along the highway between the two larger cities against the raids of Manco's Indians, who were in the province of Vilcabamba to the east.

Marcos Jiménez de la Espada Relaciones Geográficas de Indias: Peru 3 vols. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 1965), 1:181-201 passim. Editors' translation.

In the city of San Juan de la Frontera de Huamanga on the 22nd day of the month of February in the year 1586, Pedro de Romero, *vecino* and councilman of the said city, and Antonio de Chaves y Guevara, a *vecino* of the city, in fulfillment of the order given by the illustrious Count of Villar, Viceroy, Governor and Captain-General of these kingdoms, concerning the description of the Indies ordered in a letter and instructions of His Majesty, and responding in the order required, the following answer is given by virtue of the commission and delegation made to us by Amador de Cabrera and Antonio de Chaves Roenes, the ordinary magistrates of this city; and the instructions, letter, and letter of remission and appended at the end of this response.

First, in the time of the Incas this province was called Vilcas Huaman, "Huaman" meaning