The urban archaeology of early Spanish Caribbean ports of call: The unfortunate story of Nombre de Dios

Maria Fernanda Salamanca-Heyman

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The Urban Archaeology of Early Spanish Caribbean Ports of Call: The Unfortunate Story of Nombre de Dios

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Doctor of Philosophy

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The sixteenth-century port of Nombre de Dios in Panama played a crucial role in the colonization of America. From 1519 to 1597, Nombre de Dios was the Atlantic port connecting Spain with the southern Pacific colonies in America. Even though its importance to Spain's New World colonial settlement has been widely recognized, there has never been systematic historical or archaeological research undertaken to document this colonial town and describe its establishment and subsequent development and abandonment.

This study employs a comparative approach to early Spanish urban settlement in Latin America, and combines archaeological and archival data to explain the unique history of Nombre de Dios. Archaeological examination and documentary analysis has revealed the town's physical layout, its location and geographical features, and the settlement's place within the region's trade network. Findings relating to Nombre de Dios are compared to evidence from Cartagena and Veracruz, two of Spain's other sixteenth-century ports-of-call, providing important information regarding the factors responsible for the slow development of Nombre de Dios, and its abandonment before the end of the century.
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“Llegue a Nombre de Dios
nombre bueno y tierra mala
donde están las calenturas
hechas jueces de aduana...”

---

8 “I arrived in Nombre de Dios, good name and bad land, where the fevers are customs judges”. (Mateo Rojas de Oquendo in Diaz Lopez 2001: 34)
Chapter I: Introduction

In February 2009, the people of Nombre de Dios in Panama had planned to celebrate the five hundredth anniversary of this colonial settlement. The festivities were planned for over two years and were going to consist of athletic competitions followed by the Carnaval de Diablos (an annual carnival in the province of Colón). Among the celebrations however there were no activities relating to the history of the bay or the town. Even though the current inhabitants are aware of the importance of the colonial port, they continue to ignore many details of their local history. The celebration did not take place because some people questioned the year of foundation. The available chronicles are contradictory, some described that the bay was discovered in 1509, and others said it was in 1510. The lack of knowledge of the historical events surrounding the foundations of Nombre de Dios led to the postponement of these celebrations. Furthermore, should today’s inhabitants celebrate a settlement from 1509, or 1510, that was abandoned a few months later? Or should they postpone the anniversary to 2019, to commemorate the foundation of the famous colonial port of Nombre de Dios?

Even though only the inhabitants of Nombre de Dios can decide which celebrations are relevant for their community, this dissertation attempts to contribute to the reconstruction of their history. Colonial Nombre de Dios was a unique sixteenth-century settlement because of its role in the Spanish trade system and its
particular history. Until now, many details of this history were ignored. Historical studies previous to this work characterized Nombre de Dios as a sickly place, with corruption problems, and small and desolated town with poor constructions. These factors were thought to cause the abandonment of the town in 1597. However, thorough archival and archaeological research indicates that these factors were not decisive in the relocation of the port-of-call. This is evident when Nombre de Dios is compared to Cartagena (Colombia) and Veracruz (Mexico), the two other Caribbean ports of call for the Spanish fleets in the sixteenth century. Of these three ports Nombre de Dios was the only one relocated. It is argued that the abandonment of this colonial port was due to change in urban planning for ports of call at the end of the sixteenth century, Nombre de Dios did not fulfill the requirements of the new planning mode.

1.1 The sixteenth century and the foundation of Nombre de Dios

The original foundation of Nombre de Dios was the result of an unsuccessful exploration led by Spanish conquistador Diego de Nicuesa. In 1508, a capitulación—a contract between the Crown and individuals to colonize territories—granted the lands between the Darien Gulf (today part of Colombia) and Gracias a Dios Cape in Honduras to Nicuesa. This territory was later called Castilla del Oro. In his efforts to colonize this area, Nicuesa carried on various explorations along the Caribbean coast. In 1509, after a journey full of adversity and starvation, Nicuesa decided to stop in a bay. He was attracted to its easy access and rich vegetation. The details about this settlement are limited to descriptions from secondary sources such as Gonzalo
Fernández de Oviedo, Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, and Girolamo Benzoni. Their narrations state that Nicuesa arrived at the bay after being attacked by natives in nearby Portobelo. He found the bay suitable for a colony and thus he said “detengamonos aqui en nombre de Dios” [Let us stop here in the name of God], and that is how the bay acquired its name (Jay 2002).

It appears that Nicuesa and the rest of the expedition spent some months in the area where a settlement and a fort were established. The location of this first occupation is unknown. The days of Nicuesa in Nombre de Dios ended when he was informed that Vasco Nuñez de Balboa had founded a rival settlement, Santa María la Antigua del Darien, in the Darien Gulf. Thus, Nicuesa departed to claim his rights over the territory, leaving behind many of the people in his expedition. In Santa María, Nicuesa faced profound resistance to his authority and was finally exiled. He was sent out to sea and never heard from again. The events that followed Nicuesa’s departure from Nombre de Dios are not clear but it seems that the Spanish left the area or died off (Romoli 1953, Velarde 1978). In 1519, when Diego de Alvitez returned to the bay, he did not report the existence of any Spanish settlement.

The importance of Nombre de Dios lies in the role that it played after its second foundation in 1519. Vasco Nuñez de Balboa’s discovery of the Pacific in 1513, and the exploration of other southern lands led to the search for a transatlantic route that allowed the transportation of treasures from American colonies to Spain. After a decade of exploration, Panama was selected as the ideal location for this trade route. The first step in the creation of such a connection was the establishment of Panama City and Nombre de Dios. Therefore, in 1519, Pedrarias Davila, governor of Panama, founded Panama City on the Pacific coast. The same year, Diego de Alvitez, who was authorized on March 23, 1518 by Carlos V to establish a town on
the Atlantic coast of Castilla del Oro, founded the port of Nombre de Dios. The establishment of the two towns was followed by the construction of caminos [roads] linking them. This dissertation examines the town of Nombre de Dios after its second foundation and up to its abandonment in 1597.

Before its foundation, Nombre de Dios was already identified as an important port for the future of Spanish America. The simultaneous establishment of Panama City and Nombre de Dios immediately created a transoceanic trade system that played an important role in the history of the Spanish empire in the New World. Despite the equal importance of both Panama City and Nombre de Dios in the trade route, the Atlantic port of Nombre de Dios did not develop at the same rate as Panama City. The reasons had to do with climate, geography, and the population inhabiting the port.

The history of Nombre de Dios is perhaps most interesting because it encompasses all the factors, positive and negative, affecting sixteenth-century American colonies. It was an insalubrious place, with a difficult geography, and few dietary resources. Nombre de Dios was known to be a sickly place, and often called “The Spanish Graveyard.” The sixteenth-century geographer Juan López de Velasco defined Nombre de Dios as “a very sickly town.” He suggested that if a fleet arrived between the months of May and November, epidemics would claim hundreds of lives (Pérez-Mallaina 1998). María del Carmen Mena García suggests that in addition to the unhealthiness of the isthmus, ecological barriers did not favor the town. The mountains, high vegetation, and the existence of a swamp on the outskirts of the urban core were a handicap for the normal development of the port (Mena García 1992). Furthermore, Laurentino Díaz López proposes that the bay did not fulfill the ideal requirements of maritime traffic, even in the age of small, tub-like ships. The
bay was shallow, full of reefs, and too exposed to the sea (Diaz Lopez 2001). The bay had no natural defenses, and its beach grew more shallow over time (Mena Garcia 1992).

Nombre de Dios was unique not only for its ecological characteristics, but also for its unusual relationship with nearby hinterland dwellers, many of them runaway slaves. The religious conversion of natives was one of the initial reasons the Spanish established settlements in America, but there were no natives in the area of Nombre de Dios. This fact interrupted the founding of the colony and led to a dependency on enslaved Africans imported for labor. Africans appeared as early as 1517 in Panama. After 1542, when the Spanish Crown officially abolished the enslavement of natives, demand for enslaved Africans rose dramatically. The demand for slaves in mines and on plantations led to the importation of large numbers of Africans, many of whom passed through Panama on their way to other colonies. Others stayed to work the mule train system. Run away groups soon began inhabiting the wild forest between Panama City and Nombre de Dios, resulting in the formation of some of the largest and most successful maroon settlements in the New World. Negotiations to end maroon attacks on Spanish populations resulted in the creation of free African settlements. These settlements developed close relations with Spanish communities. For example, Santiago del Principe was founded in 1580 only one half league away from Nombre de Dios. The subsistence of the Spanish town benefited from the short distance between the two because Africans cultivated and raised chickens, and sold their labor in the Spanish town. Free Africans not only became subsistence sources for the European population, but also established intimate relations with the Spaniards that resulted in mestizaje.
Although Nombre de Dios’s Spanish population benefited from the interaction with free blacks, most merchants opted for the safety and security of Panama City, on the Pacific coast of the isthmus. Europeans living in Nombre de Dios were more interested in personal gain than in building a successful settlement. They were known to transgress the Crown’s regulations and perform poorly. Most of Nombre de Dios’ population lived in Panama City most of the year, and they only went to Nombre de Dios for the arrival of the Spanish fleet. This floating population lacked interest in the prosperity of the port and contributed to the many illnesses and discomforts of the city (Mena Garcia 1992). A small, almost non-existent, population was a characteristic continually assigned to Nombre de Dios.

Few historical studies have emphasized the experiences of the people that lived in Nombre de Dios. Even fewer studies have discussed the urban structure of the port. For example, at the end of the sixteenth century Baptista Antonelli described a city of 30 houses; however, the validity of such a description is questionable given Antonelli’s interest in moving the port to Portobelo. Although the year-round size of the population is uncertain, historians agree that thousands of people attended its annual trade fairs. The visitors included Spaniards, European merchants, enslaved Africans, and natives. This constant flux of population through town made Nombre de Dios an episodic city, characterized by periods of intense commercial activity followed by periods of stagnation.

Finally, piracy was one of the factors that most affected the town’s development, or the lack of it. The port was attractive to foreign empires because it was the lay point of merchandise exchange and, above all, was periodically heaping with treasures from Peru. The port turned into an insecure city because of the continual pirate threats and the absence of defensive structures in the town. Frequent
pirate attacks on Spanish ships that were coming to the port, and two well-documented English attacks on the town in 1573 and 1596, precipitated the abandonment of Nombre de Dios.

After Nombre de Dios was abandoned in 1597, it all but disappeared from the record. The only information is a picture from 1909 where the town is composed of thatched houses (Figure 1.1). This picture was probably taken some time during the construction of the Panama Canal. The construction of the Canal involved the extraction of tons of sand from Nombre de Dios, creating a lagoon that today splits the town in two.

Under the Panamanian government, Nombre de Dios became a town in the Santa Isabel district of the province of Colon. The Nombre de Dios, Fato, and

Figure 1.1: Nombre de Dios in 1909 (http://www.bruceruiz.net/PanamaHistory/nombre_de_dios.htm)
Terrain Rivers flow into the bay. The introduction of new species, human activities, and shifts of river streams have changed the landscape of Nombre de Dios since the Spanish arrived in the bay. For example, some lagoons have dried out and the coastline has moved several meters out. The clearance of fields for agriculture displaced fauna and flora to other areas. In the last few years, a road was built to connect Nombre de Dios with Portobelo. This road cuts the colonial town in half. Furthermore, a manganese mining company destroyed part of the archaeological site as well as one of the sixteenth-century landmarks, El Morro, which was blown up for raw stone to build a jetty.

The previous archaeological research in the colonial site consisted of explorations led by Jose Maria Cruxent in the 1970s. Cruxent identified the location of the colonial town as well as other archaeological features. He described the existence of over one hundred meters of a stone paved road—possibly the Camino Real—and many fragments of ceramic roof tiles and iron (Cruxent n.d.). After Cruxent visited the site, the only effort to encourage archaeological research in Nombre de Dios was a presentation made by Beatriz Rovira in a University of Panama meeting in 1993 (Rovira 1993).

1.2 Contributions to Anthropological Perspectives in Urban Studies

In the last few decades, the study of sixteenth-century Spanish colonies has focused on cultural contact and creolization mostly through the study of ceramics. The interest in cultural contact reflected in ceramics has displaced other interesting elements of early Spanish colonies such as the role of urbanism. When the Spanish
arrived in the New World, there were no royal policies in place regarding the selection of regions to settle or the way a city should be structured. It was not until almost a century later that the Spanish Crown standardized the procedures for establishing cities in the New World. For this reason, Spanish urbanism has remained an interesting subject of study. However, few studies have focused on sixteenth-century settlements, creating a gap in our knowledge of the early Spanish colonies in the New World.

Among other things, urban studies involve the analysis of size, spacing, layout, and construction in relation to the physical environment, as well as density of population, and the character of human economies and cultures (Dickinson 1951). To understand how towns and cities developed, it is necessary to determine the distinctive functions leading to their foundation. Function is the driving force of town life and in many cases dictated the physical layout of a town. Sixteenth-century Spanish regulations, increasingly codified over time, limited the functions of colonial cities in America. The prohibition of manufacturing in the New World, Seville's trade monopoly, and the shipping restrictions to the annual convoys influenced the development of Spanish American cities (Smith 1968)

The interaction of function and form gave structure to the settlements. In order to understand the development and success of a city, it is necessary to undertake holistic studies that cover all aspects of a town, including its historical development and physical conditions. Henry Lefevbre proposed the study of urban settlements using function, form, and structure as interpretative tools to analyze the use and significance of space in the development of settlements. The present study will employ these elements to understand the unusual case of Nombre de Dios (Lefebvre 1974). Historical archaeology offers an interdisciplinary approach to the study of
function, form, and structure. Since historical accounts of early colonies are not always accurate and many times are the result of hearsay, historical archaeology provides tools to better understand the interaction among these three elements. Archaeological studies have proved to reveal new information about form of cities, such as the case of La Isabela (Deagan and Cruxent 2002). Thus, archaeology is a crucial component when analyzing organic and planned urban growths of towns, not only in colonial contexts but also in any period. Furthermore, archaeology can help to understand the role of space in the structures of towns.

Little is known about the way early Spanish colonial towns were founded, but it is a fact that the sixteenth-century Spanish conquest of America resulted in many settlements. However, many of the early towns were later abandoned or relocated as a result of ecology, resource exhaustion, and changing in commercial needs. Some settlements that proved difficult to maintain were simply moved because the Spanish idea of city was based more on community than on the physical structure of a town (Kagan 2000). Citizens were the core of Spanish urban settlements; thus, they would carry with them the sense of community and its principles to any location they moved. After the foundation of a Spanish colony, soldiers became citizens. The success of the colonies' shift from conquest camps to permanent settlements was based on the sense of obligation developed by the citizens who were meant to work towards the success of the city. This urban-oriented mentality marks the Spanish colonization strategy in America. In contrast, early English and Portuguese settlements in America lacked such structure. Englishmen were usually military and plantation employees of a trade company, while many Portuguese men remained soldiers to protect the factorias. English and Portuguese towns were assumed
subordinate to their Crown, whereas Spanish colonial cities, like those in Spain itself, were understood to be semi-autonomous.

Even though the concept of city was established, Richard Morse explains that at the start of American colonization, the Spanish Crown did not establish strict control over the form of new towns (Morse 1962). Even without these rules, it seems that the early founders of Spanish American towns often used the well-known grid layout. In 1573, the Spanish Crown established The Ordinances for the Discovery, New Settlement, and Pacification of the Indies. These regulations were intended to create desired spatial structures and uniform settlements. Robert Smith suggests that the imposition of the grid plan was an outstanding American contribution to urbanism because it was used in America before it became accepted in Europe. For example, the Plaza Mayor in Madrid was built in 1617 and was modeled after the broad open spaces of Mexico and other Spanish American colonies (Smith 1955).

Although the intention of the Spanish Crown was to establish strong and uniform towns that would control and centralize the resources of the New World, diverse local conditions did not permit to maintain the ‘ideal’ grid plan. In other words, local conditions affected the idealized Spanish town plan, giving rise to unique variations, some of which failed and others that survived. Even though the intention was to spread and consolidate Spanish structures, many towns were abandoned or transferred during the colonial period. The failure of colonial towns should be studied on a case by case basis; however, there are general conditions, such as piracy, shifting trade networks, marronage, and the reduction of native population, that often triggered the instability of some towns.

The models proposed in historical archaeology in the last few decades to describe sixteenth-century Spanish colonies have focused on the understanding of
cultural contact and *mestizaje* (Deagan and Koch 1983; Ewen 1991, Deagan and Cruxent 2002, and Zarankin 1995). However, these models cannot be applied to Nombre de Dios because of its unique circumstances as the key transoceanic port-of-call of the Spanish fleets. This study of Nombre de Dios will contribute to the understanding of ports of call in colonial America. Even though these ports were few in the colonial period, they played crucial roles in the colonization of America. The ports of call founded around 1519 were the first city-ports with guidelines suggested by the Crown. It was a time of experimentation to find the best forms and structures for the colonies in America. In some cases, such as Cartagena (Colombia) and Panama City, this experimentation was successful, but it failed in the case of Nombre de Dios.

In order to understand the development of Nombre de Dios it is necessary to trace its historical context, outline the dynamics of the region, and compare it with other ports of call. The multidisciplinary approach inherent in historical archaeology allows a study of Nombre de Dios from different points. Documentary evidence provides details about the life and ideals of the people living in the port, and archaeology offers a unique opportunity to explore the physical expressions of those ideals as well as the cultural changes resulting from adaptation to new circumstances and cultural interactions. For the purpose of this dissertation, the case of Nombre de Dios will be compared to Veracruz (Mexico) and Cartagena. Spain’s two other key mainland ports on the Atlantic coast of America. This comparison will elucidate the conditions experienced by the ports of call in the Caribbean, the different factors affecting them, and the changes in function, form, and structure they experienced over time.
In the following chapters, I will emphasize urban strategies, specifically Spanish strategies in America. I will also discuss the concept of city for the Spanish Empire and how it affected the colonization process. After outlining these features of Spanish cities in the sixteenth century, I will describe the cases of Cartagena and Veracruz. Then, I will describe the results of the historical archaeological studies in Nombre de Dios. The amount of archival and archaeological information about Nombre de Dios is extremely large and complex. In order to maintain better control of this data, I split the information according to the source. Thus, Chapter IV summarizes the archival information, while Chapter V describes the archaeological information. The division of the information should not be interpreted as a subordination of one source to the other but as complementary data about the colonial port. The goal of this dissertation is to reconstruct the history of Nombre de Dios specifically and contribute to the understanding of colonial urbanism in America generally.
Chapter II: 
Sixteenth Century Atlantic Urbanism

The discovery of the New World has been an attractive object of study for many disciplines because of the complexity entailed in the conquest of America. This encounter involved the physical and intellectual imposition of European principles on American communities. Colonial cities and towns were used as tools for subjugation, conquest of territories, and acquisition of wealth. The variable situation of each individual territory, for example presence or absence of native groups and access to precious metals, influenced the development of colonial towns and their success or failure. Even though many towns were established with the same purpose, they developed differently. The ideal appearance of a settlement in contrast to its physical layout, the development of a town, and the significance of spaces in a settlement, is the subject of urban studies.

During the colonial period, expanding empires used different urban strategies to occupy new territories. For example, the Spanish empire resorted to the foundation of cities with the objective to civilize the ‘barbarian’ natives, while the Portuguese established ports based on their commercial interest in Brazil. The difference in their objective when settling the American territory resulted in fundamental differences, such as an urban or rural character of the settlements.

The distinction between urban and rural is a qualitative one. The urban character is not a result of the number of inhabitants but of the economic complexity
and the mentality of the community. Urban centers have been defined as the space where the exchange of products occurs. For Henry Lefebvre 'urban space' is a synonym of center and centrality (Lefebvre 1974). Jay Kinsbruner further explains, "...the urban center is a marketplace in its most defining characteristic...Urban agglomerations provide social, economic, and geographical opportunities that rarely exist in rural environments..." (Kinsbruner 2005: 2). Urban centers are generally characterized by diversification of activities, while rural settlements are characterized primarily by their specialization on agricultural and production activities.

Although mercantile activities are a fundamental difference, the discrepancies between urban and rural settlements go beyond economic bases. Robert Dickinson explains that the word urban implies activities divorced from cultivation of the soil and associated with activities at fixed places. These activities are cultural, commercial, industrial, administrative, and residential, including the non-producers who are dependent on the rural workers and the countryside to fulfill their basic needs (Dickinson 1951).

The best way to understand the difference between urban and rural, in other aspects besides mercantile, is returning to the fundamental difference between Spanish and Portuguese settlements in America. As is mentioned above, the conquest of America by the Spanish Empire was initially based on religious conversion. This idea had its roots in the Reconquista, which took place in the centuries before the discovery of America. Thus, the idea of civilizing barbarians was transferred to America and it was the fundamental raison d'etre of the first Spanish settlements. The Spanish legal, administrative, and religious system had an urban character because it needed a cultural and religious center to allow the 'civilization' of America.
In contrast, the Portuguese established *factorias* [trading factories] rather than towns to provide a trading link with Portugal (Schwartz 1969). Commerce was their principal concern; thus, their investments were in fortifications, warehouses, and piers. Robert Smith suggests that Portuguese colonies tended to be "*a picturesque confusion*" (Smith 1955). They apparently followed the medieval concept of defense characterized by settlements located on promontories. These settlements were only used to claim territory in America and for sugar production. The influential colonists resided in rural areas where they had their plantations, while urban centers were used only as transit points. Almost all the early settlements in Brazil were on the seacoast as opposed to Spanish towns that preferred inland locations.

Instead of having centers for the colonization of America, the Portuguese used plantations for the exploitation of the land nearest the coast. The basis of Portuguese colonization was mercantile instead of cultural. However, the religious base for the Spanish conquest of America should not be interpreted as the only reason for colonization but as fundamental for their urban strategy. Later in the colonial period, this idea was complemented, and even replaced, by commercial imperatives causing the abandonment and creation of new settlements. It is possible to suggest that the urban and rural characters of Spanish and Portuguese settlements were due to their functions as cultural or mercantile centers.

### 2.1 Understanding Settlements: Function, Form and Structure

Urban studies have suggested that the best way to understand a colonial settlement is through the analysis of its function, in conjunction with its form and
structure (Dickinson 1951, Kinsbruner 2005, Lefebvre 1974). The function refers to the role of a settlement within an empire, Dickinson further explains,

"Function is the driving force of town life. The functions of the town, each of which must find appropriate places in its spatial structure, are religious, political, commercial, industrial and residential. The needs of rulers and populace must also be catered for—defense against human enemies, against fire, famine and disease; facilities for the provision of food, water, sewage disposal, ...and, finally, recreation, in the form of theatre, arena, public squares and stadiums. The importance of each of these primary functions in the origin and development of the town varies from age to age, and, in consequence, the structure and composition of the functional elements may vary also" (Dickinson 1951: 267).

Although during the development of a town its functions sometimes diversify, the establishment of settlements is the result of one or two initial functions. It is possible to suggest six main functions that gave origin to pre-industrial cities. Table 2.1 shows the different functions and types of settlements of pre-industrial towns, as well as some examples of towns in Spain and America. It should be noted that some of these towns had more than one function when they were founded, and they acquired more functions later on.

To understand towns and cities, it is necessary to determine the distinctive functions of settlements and to interpret these groupings in relation to historical
development and physical conditions. Dickinson explains that settlements “have distinctive features in structure and style according to the economy and needs of the occupants and the architectural ideas prevalent at the time they were built” (Dickinson 1951: 4). Thus, function and form are correlated. The form is the physical layout of the settlement. It is argued that function and form are the result of factors, such as royal policies, nature of population, and commercial networks, influencing the foundation and development of the settlement. It is possible to suggest three basic types of urban forms: organic, planned, and hybrid. The basic difference is that in organic settlements form followed function, while in planned settlements function set up the form. Hybrid forms have both organic and planned qualities.

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1 These were Inca structures built along roads for lodging state personnel and messengers. They are found in Peru, Bolivia, Chile, and Colombia.
Organic forms are commonly found in medieval towns in Europe and in some Spanish American colonies predating the foundation of Natá (Panama) in 1523. The best examples of organic forms are medieval cities in Europe. It has been argued that medieval towns were the result of commercial activities. Medieval urban layouts were globular settlements where the center of the town was a castle surrounded by households. The castle was the center of the economy and life of the town (Morse 1962). Kinsbruner explains that topography greatly dictated the physical form of towns. When permitted, the form could be either radial or linear. Radial distribution consisted of buildings and streets flowing out from a central market and administrative center. In contrast, linear distribution occurred when buildings were constructed alongside a single route, for example, a royal highway (Kinsbruner 2005).

When the topography of the settlement did not cooperate, the urban form was more eclectic, such as the case of La Isabela, one of the first permanent European settlements in America. This city was founded for religious conversion and as a defensible trading post in 1493. Fifteenth-century descriptions of La Isabela suggest that the town was formally laid out on a grid plan. However, recent archaeological findings reveal that the layout of the town is instead “a conformance to the geographical features of ravines and sea” (Deagan and Cruxent 2002: 104). The difference between the description of layout and the actual physical layout of the town might be the result of the Renaissance idea of the city that was influencing Spain after the expulsion of the Moors. Renaissance cities were supposed to reflect an organized structure that would be the core of civilized life.

A good example that clearly shows the difference between organic and planned towns is Santa Fé de La Vega in Granada, Spain. Ferdinand and Isabela, Spanish rulers at the end of the fifteenth century, built Santa Fé in 1491 with the
purpose to completely expel Islam from Iberia. The town’s layout was a military form that consisted of a fortified rectangle with a center where two perpendicular axes crossed. These axes were the only access to the city and were secured with gates. The gates and walls isolated and protected the city from the outside (Smith 1955). Thus, the strong and structured construction of the city contributed to the fall of Granada and the final defeat of the Moors. Although the exact layout of Santa Fé did not become the rule for Spanish colonies, it influenced early Spanish towns in America such as Santo Domingo, capital of the modern Dominican Republic. I will explain more details of this settlement later in this chapter.

Planned towns are mostly characterized by the existence of a grid. The gridiron is the characteristic that best describes Spanish colonial towns in America after 1523. It consists of a prearranged layout of the town in a way that concentrates the governmental and religious power at the core of the city. The purpose of the gridiron was to clearly show the supremacy of Spanish government and religion over native cultures in America. Therefore, in many cases Spanish cities were established in the same location as native settlements, as in Mexico City, Quito, and Cuzco, all of which were symbolic native centers. They were destroyed and rebuilt as Spanish cities. Lefebvre emphasizes that the social space created by the Spanish empire followed a rational form and served as an instrument for the violation of an existing space occupied by natives (Lefebvre 1974). In colonial contexts, encounters between different groups greatly determine the use and distribution of space. For example, the existence of Tenochtitlán before Mexico City influenced the location of Spanish structures. In contrast, cities such as Nombre de Dios located far from native towns, in theory, could implement the Crown’s own dictates.
Finally, hybrid forms are complex structures that consist of nucleated settlements with satellites. This form is used to control larger territories. For example, the Inca Empire established central settlements that ruled over extensive territories. In order to maintain control of the conquered land and people, it established small forts throughout their territory (from Chile to southern Colombia) to have a physical presence and secure subjugation.

In addition to function and form, Henry Lefebvre suggests that to understand a settlement it is necessary to study its structure. Form, function and structure “are generally given in and through a material realm which at once binds them together and preserves distinctions between them... Form is merely the sign of function, and the relation between the two is what gives rise to structure” (Lefebvre 1974: 148). To accomplish a better understanding of Spanish Colonial towns, it is necessary to study these three elements and their interaction with each other.

The form, function and structure of a Spanish American city were greatly determined by the role the settlement played in the colonial system. In order to understand Spanish American colonies, it is necessary to be aware of the conditions influencing the development of the towns. The Spanish Crown based its regime in America on religious and commercial principles, which dictated the fate of many towns. However, this system was not in place at the beginning of the conquest. The initial Spanish expansion was disorganized, even though the Crown implemented the same mechanism used in the Reconquista to create stability in American colonies. Spain appeared to control the American colonies through their principles of civilization. However, the different interpretations of these principles, the relative freedom given to conquistadores and colonists, and the different conditions of the
New World, resulted in a colonization process that started with organic towns and ended with homogeneous grid planned towns.

### 2.2 The Sixteenth Century and the New World

The Spanish presence in the New World began with the exploration of the Caribbean and the establishment of the first Spanish colonies: La Navidad (1492) in Haiti, La Isabela (1493) and Santo Domingo (1496) in the Dominican Republic. After the conquest of the Caribbean, the Spanish proceeded to the mainland where they found wealthier natives than the ones in the Caribbean Islands. At the same time that the Spanish found more treasures and established more settlements on the mainland, trade between America and Spain increased. Consequently, English and French pirates became a threat, creating the need to control and protect the transportation of merchandise. Therefore, a system of convoys between America and Spain was established in the 1520s. Trade between the colonies and the motherland grew so fast that by the middle of the sixteenth century, around two hundred vessels formed the fleets of New Spain [Mexico] and Tierra Firme [Panama and Colombia] (Pérez-Malalaina 1998). In 1564, the Spanish Crown established a policy where two fleets were sent every year to the American colonies, stopping only in designated ports of call (Figure 2.1). These commercial fleets, with their accompanying warships, symbolized the power of the Spanish empire.

These fleets would sail from Seville (Spain) to America. In the Caribbean, they would split, one sailing to New Spain and the other to Tierra Firme. The New Spain fleets would arrive in Veracruz, while the Tierra Firme fleet sailed to Cartagena
Figure 2.1: Map showing the route of the Spanish fleet in the Caribbean (Segovia 1998: 16).

and, eventually, to Nombre de Dios or Portobelo. When the fleet was close to America, a convoy would leave from Peru and sail to Panama City, transporting products from the southern colonies. From there, the merchandise was taken to the Atlantic Coast through the Camino Real or the Camino de Cruces (Figure 2.2). When the fleet arrived in Nombre de Dios and Veracruz, trade fairs took place in both towns with merchants from many of the colonies. The return of the fleet to Spain began with a stop in Havana before its return to Spain (Pérez-Mallalína 1998).

2.3 Early Spanish American Urbanism

The sixteenth century is characterized by confusion and experimentation. The first cities and towns founded in the New World were the result of a rapid and unplanned
imperial expansion; therefore, many early towns were poorly located. In addition to religious conversion, the first Spanish cities in America had different functions. In the Caribbean, La Isabela was founded as the capital of the Spanish colonies in America (Deagan and Cruxent 2002); Puerto Real was meant to be an agricultural center and a port (Ewen 1991, Deagan 1995); and Santo Domingo as the gateway to the Caribbean and as capital of the colonies to replace La Isabela. In Mexico and Central America, Veracruz, Acapulco, Acla, Nombre de Dios, and Panama City were founded as trading ports to connect Spain with the Pacific coast of America. The rise of Cartagena on Colombia’s Caribbean coast and Havana on the north coast of Cuba, were the result of expanding Atlantic trading networks.

Although the first Spanish American towns were founded for different reasons, all of them competed for a place in the resource exploitation and trade
system of the New World to insure their subsistence and permanence. The first towns established in the Caribbean and on the mainland either fell into oblivion or developed rapidly based on their location in connection to the trade routes. For example, Santo Domingo played an administrative role during the first decades of the sixteenth century, but when the convoys’ routes were established, Santo Domingo was left out as a port of call. Consequently, other ports, such as Cartagena de Indias and Veracruz, which were obligated stops for the fleet, slowly assumed the administrative duties of Santo Domingo. Both Cartagena and Veracruz grew rapidly while Santo Domingo lost importance. Competition to be included on the convoy routes was fierce between cities in the New World. Many settlements in the Spanish Caribbean reacted to their displacement from the official fleet routes by turning to contraband and by establishing trade networks with the areas with direct access to the fleets (De la Fuente 2008).

Competition between cities to become part of the European-American trade system took place not only in America but also in Europe. For example, Cadiz and Seville in Spain were in constant competition to monopolize trade with the New World. The Spanish crown attempted to control trade between the New World and the Old World by establishing an ‘official port’ policy to stop the exportation out of Spain of precious metals from the New World, and to prevent undesirable people from entering the American colonies and jeopardizing the ideology and economy of the empire. During the first two centuries of the colonization of America, Seville was Spain’s official port of call because it was large enough to hold the quantity of visitors and ships involved in the trade with America. Also, it was well defended because it was located far upriver from the Atlantic coast. However, the more vulnerable but more accessible city of Cadiz slowly took on the functions of Seville
by gaining political and economic power, thus causing Seville’s economic and urban growth to stagnate. Finally in 1717, the Spanish crown ordered the transfer of the *Casa de Contratación* [Trade House] to Cadiz; as a result, Seville declined.

The initial decades of the conquest of the New World produced many settlements (Figure 2.3). However, these settlements were not well organized until the Spanish Crown established a set of policies to create an urban, economic, and administrative structure in the colonies. Because these policies were instituted slowly, some settlements were established without these guidelines, while others did not develop a structure sufficiently strong to survive the changes imposed by new commercial routes. These commercial routes were largely dictated by access to mineral wealth, presence of native groups, and favorable geographical conditions that facilitated the transportation of merchandise. As a result, sixteenth-century colonies suffered many changes in function, form, and structure once the commercial fleet system was established.

Figure 2.3: First Spanish colonies in America mainland.
Early colonizers had a different mindset than later immigrants. Initially, the *conquistadores* wanted to conquer the native lands and people, exploit resources, and return to their home country. Several settlements were established to be base camps for expeditions (e.g. San Sebastian, Santa Maria La Antigua). The excitement of gold and silver and the resulting search for instant wealth led to disorganized settlements (Kubler 1985b). Many towns were neither well planned nor ideally located (Sharp 1976), and many times they were the result of a capitulación [agreement] where the Spanish Crown appointed a Spanish captain as governor of a new province. Thus, the first thing the captain would do after arriving in the new land was to establish a settlement to occupy the land. Demetrio Ramos Perez suggests that these agreements and the desire to secure the land explain the rush to found colonial towns. In many cases, the new town was a simple camp that, with the appointment of a municipal council, transformed into an official colony (Ramos Perez 1975). Many of these early towns were later abandoned due to poor drainage, severe weather, and difficult access to natural resources. Therefore, Spanish settlements moved or were abandoned as settlers sought areas from which they could gain the greatest agricultural or mineral benefits (Graff 1976). For example, the mining town of Remedios in New Granada was founded in 1560 and relocated twice before 1569.

Richard Morse explains that at the beginning of American colonization, the Spanish Crown did not establish strict control over the form of new towns. The initial urban layouts seem to flow from medieval practice, which consisted in the arrangement of households around a castle. Morse also suggests that some colonial cities, such as Mexico City, show native influences (Morse 1962). Although Morse attributes the structure of Mexico City to medieval and native influences, later interpretations suggest that the Spanish, in order to facilitate the control of native
groups, preserved native structures and assumed the role of the native community leaders. In addition, George Kubler argues that to consolidate their control, colonial authorities suppressed nearly all symbolic native expressions such as temples, and replaced them with European conventions such as churches and cathedrals (Kubler 1985a). The Spanish conquest was not only over territory but also over social structures; this is obvious in the case of Mexico City and Cuzco where the Spanish built their imperial and religious buildings on top of native structures.

The Spanish Crown granted freedom to the first founders of American colonies by suggesting the establishment of ‘organized’ settlements. However, there was no explanation of the meaning of ‘organized towns’. This concept was left open to individual interpretations by the conquistadores. Thus, early settlements do not comply with the gridiron plan but tend to have similar components since the founders followed familiar examples of settlements in Spain. For example, when Santo Domingo was rebuilt in 1502, Nicolas de Ovando followed the form used in Santa Fé de la Vega in Granada. Ovando followed the military layout of Santa Fé and fortified the city as well (Smith 1955).

Although the Spanish-American grid arrangement for cities was not officially required until 1573, the Crown suggested some guidelines for the structure of new colonial towns many years before. In 1513, King Ferdinand instructed Pedrarias Davila to form a series of ‘ordered’ towns. Ordered towns were understood as cities laid out according to the gridiron with elements such as church, prison, and town hall, which were components of a civilized colony (Kagan 2000). Different explanations for the use of the grid plan in Spanish American colonies have been proposed. George Kubler argued that the grid layout originated in France in medieval times as an initiative of the Benedictine abbey of St. Honorat of Lérins. These French
settlements were laid out near rivers on wide valley floors and along principal roads as opposed to hilltops and cliffs. The towns were open sites for trade. To facilitate traffic to and from the market, they did not erect walls (Kubler 1985c). Kubler argues that “the physical resemblances of this rational open-city plan to the new American towns of the sixteenth century in the Spanish colonies are close enough in time and in political connection to require close attention” (Kubler 1985c: 105).

In contrast, Robert Dickinson has studied the history of the rectangular or grid system of urban planning. He argues that grid systems are characteristic of all ages of town planning and tracks the history of the grid design to early civilizations in India, Egypt and Babylonia. He explains that during the Renaissance and Baroque periods, this design was combined with fortresses, and in the medieval town, the palatial residence of the king or lord was placed in the center instead of the marketplace and church (Dickinson 1951). Independently from its origins, the gridiron system had some advantages. First, it allowed expansion upon the same plan; and second, it provided imperial uniformity (Smith 1955).

In 1573, the Spanish crown established The Ordinances for the Discovery, New Settlement, and Pacification of the Indies (Kinsbruner 2005: 24). These regulations summarized previously implemented royal instructions written to maintain control over commercial and social relations. Although the intention of the Spanish crown was to establish strong towns that would control and centralize the resources of the New World, the diverse local conditions did not always permit physical implementation of the ‘ideal’ plan of Spanish colonial towns. In other words, local conditions, added to the idealized Spanish town plan, created unique social spaces.
Although many American towns were founded during the sixteenth century, it was hardly a period characterized by extensive construction activity. Sidney Markman explains that “it was not until almost a century later that the ferment of the conquest, both spiritual and material, had subsided sufficiently for an accelerated building activity to occur and for a distinctive architectural style to begin to appear” (Markman 1956: 18). Furthermore, Markman explains that few buildings were built during the sixteenth century—especially in Central America—for five reasons. First, the population of indigenous groups and Spanish settlers was very small. Second, native groups were scattered and religious conversions were still occurring. Third, there was limited access to stones and bricks; thus, the construction materials most commonly used were wood and straw, which were considered of temporary character due to fires and weather conditions. Fourth, there were few craftsmen in the colonies. And fifth, natural disasters such as earthquakes required the reconstruction and alteration of existing structures (Markman 1956).

Spanish American colonial architecture varied according to the area; it is possible to identify two styles: highland and coastal. Construction materials and building adaptations represent the fundamental differences between the two styles. Hence, on the coast, adobe clay and reeds were common. Churches and cloisters had piers. Thatch roofing with a coat of plaster, and matted reeds on timber frames, were perfect adaptations to survive frequent earthquakes. On the other hand, highland constructions were of stone and fired brick, and churches had slender stone columns (Kubler and Soria 1959). These differences in many cases were due to accessibility of raw materials; many coastal towns did not have a source of stone for foundations or clay to manufacture bricks.
European towns were—in many cases—the result of trade routes. Therefore, part of the success and persistence of first towns founded in America was due to trade routes established soon after the discovery of America. Morse suggests that “the Latin American town appears ‘artificial’... in so far as it aspired to be something more than a military, administrative, or missionary outpost. For a New World town was established in a vast continent where regional trade routes and regional economies were not to achieve permanent features for generations, even centuries” (Morse 1962: 322). In contrast, Lefebvre argues against the artificial character of Spanish colonies by explaining that colonial towns were instruments of production (Lefebvre 1974). They were used to introduce foreign social and economic structures to establish a base for the expansion of the Spanish empire.

Although the intention was to spread and consolidate Spanish structures, it was common for Spanish towns to be abandoned or moved to other locations during the colonial period. To explain the failure of Spanish settlements, individual cases must be examined; however, there are general conditions that triggered the instability of some towns, including:

“...Indian attacks, earthquakes, or faulty initial judgments of soil or climate. But taken together, or seen over a period of three or more centuries, they reflect the unstable equilibrium of a continent not internally knit by exchange and commerce. Spanish American cities were separately linked with Seville overseas, which served both as market and as source of imports. If a region had no produce for the mother country, its economy centered almost exclusively upon the market of the local town” (Morse 1962: 323).
James Lockhart suggests that Spanish society in the Indies was import-export oriented at the very base and in every aspect. The silver industry was the ultimate source of economic well being of most of the Spaniards because it was a source that had no competition and was more abundant than gold. Lockhart proposes that the great majority of the Spaniards in the Indies were distributed along two lines leading from an Atlantic port to the silver deposits, which he calls trunk lines. Furthermore, the Spaniards who were outside the trunk lines were there by mistake or from lack of choice. They either thought other regions would be as advantageous as Peru and Mexico, or they arrived late to the colonies (Lockhart 1999).

Despite the location and instability of the American cities, they were the point of departure for the colonization of America. They were the center of energy and organization for the exploitation of resources. Morse explains four aspects of Spanish American towns based on the relation between colonization and exploitation (Morse 1962). First, the abandonment and transfer of towns was the result of errors of judgment by the founders who were unaware of the local geography and could not predict future trade routes. Second, it was difficult to maintain the concentration of a population when leading citizens moved to other regions looking for better economic rewards. Third, status was determined by land ownership instead of status dictating the relation to the land. In other words, the first Spanish to arrive in America acquired land which determined their social status within the city. In contrast, older societies in Europe determined land ownership based on previous status. And fourth, the commercial policies of the Spanish regime tied each colonial city to Seville, creating dependence and isolation in the American colonies (Morse 1962).
Spanish explorers were driven by the possibilities of exploiting new territories; therefore, to maintain an urban center was difficult when the wealth was outside of town. In addition, if social status was determined by land ownership, Spaniards of low social status would prefer to own land even if they had to be away from the urban center.

The Spanish empire was based on a network of settlements. Spaniards in Europe were encouraged to migrate to cities based on the royal system of centralization and control. The colonial policies established soon after the conquest regarding the foundation of settlements had two objectives: to create centers of exploitation of gold, silver, and precious stones; and to restrict the colonies’ consumption of manufactured goods to those produced in Spain or sent from Spanish ports (Smith 1968). Trade was to remain in the hands of the Spanish; the colonies were not supposed to produce any goods that could compete with Spain (Southall 1998: 259). However, given that Spain had little to offer to the colonies, these rules were continually transgressed with contraband trading. Official trade routes, to a certain degree, guaranteed stability and commercial prosperity to the administrative, military and religious nuclei of the American colonies (Morse 1962).

The commercial prosperity of the towns did not occur in isolation. Freebooters and pirates threatened the ports and the ships arriving in the area. The incursions of North European corsairs in conjunction with heavy tropical vegetation and ill weather marked the architecture of the Caribbean and the main ports of America. Their vulnerable position led to “a hypertrophy of the defensive tissues, the normal development of other kinds of architecture was inhibited. The island and coastal cities became immense masonry carapaces, sheltering the fragmentary
society of barracks and commercial warehouses, often without other architecture than huts and shelters” (Kubler and Soria 1959: 65-66).

The rising emphasis on trade and the growing threat of foreigners’ attacks, influenced the initial urban strategy. At the end of the sixteenth century, the Crown ordered Italian military architect Baptista Antonelli to travel around the major ports in America to evaluate their capability to serve as trade post and defensive ports. Thus, the change in emphasis from religious conversion to territorial defense caused changes in urban strategies and led to modifications in the urban landscape as well as the relocation of cities.

2.4 Summary

Some argue that to understand urban settlements, it is necessary to study their function, form, and structure and their interaction as well. It is argued that the first Spanish settlements in America were the result of the Spanish Empire’s religious crusade that started with the fight against Islam in Spain. However, the emphasis on religion was soon displaced by an emphasis on trade and exploitation of resources.

The conquistadores of America had a preconceived idea of cities based on the Spanish religious crusade; however, the physical forms of towns varied according to their interpretation of the Spanish principles of neo-Roman civilization and pacification. These different interpretations led to settlements with organic forms. Yet when the Crown established regulations to homogenize the structures of Spanish American settlements, the result was a uniform and clear idea of the duties of cities in the colonization of New World spaces. Spanish urban planning in America modified the medieval structure. It changed from a commercial core to a more holistic center
that included religious and governmental principles in conjunction with commercial ones.

Spanish urbanism in America was the result of many processes that started before the conquest of America. The *Reconquista* marked the purpose of Spanish imperial expansion. Religious conversion was the fundamental principle influencing early Spanish urban strategies in America. However, other processes subsequently influenced the development of Spanish urbanism (Table 2.2). These processes affected the colonies and Spanish imperial policies. The result was the modification of urban strategies from an emphasis on religious conversion and conquest to defense and commerce. Through the study of form, function, and structure, it is possible to understand the implications of the change in strategy and the consequences on already existent cities in the sixteenth century.

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<th>Processes affecting American urbanism</th>
<th>Conquest</th>
<th>Conversion</th>
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Table 2.2: Processes influencing Spanish urbanism in America.

In the following chapter, I will discuss the Spanish concept of city introduced in America during the colonial period and the factors influencing their development. Afterward, I will examine the role played by city ports and the Caribbean ports of call, especially Cartagena and Veracruz.
Chapter III:  
Sixteenth-Century Spanish American Cities

Pedrarias Davila was the first Spaniard to arrive in America with royal orders regarding the structure of a city. In 1519, he founded Panama City as the Pacific port to connect South America with Spain. Later that year, he ordered Diego de Alvitez to re-establish Nombre de Dios as the Atlantic port to complete the transoceanic route. These sites were not chosen arbitrarily. The royal instructions recommended specific attributes for the location of the city (Kinsbruner 2005). For example, protection of the port and ships arriving to it should be a factor. "Also the seaports were to be established with regard for the expeditious handling of cargoes. Where pack animals were unavailable, inland settlements were to be near rivers. All towns were to be close to a water supply and the mountains, swept by favorable winds, and adjacent to rich soil" (Morse 1962: 321).

Davila’s orders not only advised about location but also about internal distribution. The ordinance consisted in assigning spaces for the central square, the church, and the main streets (Morse 1962). Lefebvre further explains

"These instructions were arranged under the three heads of the discovery, settlement and pacification. The very building of the towns thus embodied a plan which could determine the mode of occupation of the territory and define how it was to be reorganized under the administrative and political authority of urban power...the result is a
strictly hierarchical organization of space, a gradual progression outwards from the town’s center, beginning with the ciudad and reaching out to the surrounding pueblos...Each square or rectangular lot has its function assigned to it, while inversely each function is assigned its own place at a greater or lesser distance from the central square...thus a high degree of segregation is superimposed upon a homogeneous space...” (Lefebvre 1974: 151-52)

The Spanish colonization of America was based on urban settlements. As previously explained, Spain was under the influence of Renaissance ideals and the efforts put into America were initially to expand Western civilization and Christianity.

George Dickinson defined a city as “a compact settlement that enjoyed a special law, that was walled, and that was usually a market and a seat of industry and commerce” (Dickinson 1951: 252). Dickinson’s definition approaches the city from an economic point of view, but as we have seen, the city for the Spanish was much more than just an economic product. The Renaissance idea of city was composed of two complementary notions: urbs and civitas. That is, the city was a built environment and a human or political community. Furthermore, Cicero defined city as “the assemblies and gatherings of men associated in justice” (Kagan 2000:20). American cities were the location for Spanish residents in the New World to monitor religious conversion, land, mines, and businesses. Moreover, the city was not only a commercial center but was also instrumental in maintaining the Spanish social structure (Smith 1968).
Cities represent new social orders because they gather together different groups that must coexist in the same space. Hispanic cities were conceived as the locus of civilized life. The city was the instrument to replace barbarian for civil behavior. Urban settlements were a synonym of civic order, justice and religion. They also symbolized *policia*, which signified the life in a community. Community life implied the subordination of individual desires to those of the community. *Policia* combined public and private concepts. The public was linked to citizenship, while the private involved personal behavior and private life (Kagan 2000).

The strategy of the Spanish empire to make the concept of *policia* work was to transform colonizers into citizens. *Conquistadores* and soldiers became citizens by participating in a foundational ceremony and with the establishment of a *cabildo* [municipal council]. Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas argued in 1560 that the Spanish city was "a perfect, self-sufficient community whose life lies in its republic" and the natural obligation of the citizens was to defend their city more than the Spanish Empire per se (Kagan 2000: 24). Although this would apparently seem contradictory to the Crown’s supremacy, it can also be interpreted as a royal strategy to conquer and colonize distant territories. If the Spaniards were committed to a community where they work together towards its survival, the Crown would have successful colonies with relatively low administrative maintenance and large profits. Furthermore, the creation of a municipal council and regional courts would absorb the deficient Spanish bureaucracy and the inadequate administrative structure.

Smith attributes that the form and function of cities are the result of the coexistence of different groups (Smith 2003). However, I consider that the initial form and function of a city, especially in early Spanish American cities, are the result of the attempt to homogenize and control people’s behavior. Furthermore, the
interaction between form, function, and inhabitants modifies the initial form and function of a city, and creates new behaviors. The success of cities relies on the adaptability to these changes and to new circumstances (e.g. piracy, marronage).

Smith allocates the success of cities to social aspects and the way they are configured by different groups. It is the daily negotiations for food, shelter, and access to land that determine the success or failure of a city (Colombijn in Smith 2003). Furthermore, Smith suggests that these negotiations are manifested in the physical environment “in monuments designed by leaders and built by followers; in the juxtaposition and accommodation reached within neighborhoods; and within domestic spheres in the architecture of houses, courtyards, and burial places” (Smith 2003: 8). Furthermore, Dickinson explains

“The city, when viewed from this morphological standpoint, is the expression of the activities and purposes of its inhabitants, and of the configuration of the land on which it is sited. Moreover, the character of its structures depends not merely upon the purpose for which they are needed or the materials of which they are built. Architectural features of the separate forms in the build of the city, no less than their architectonic relationships to each other, depend upon cultural contacts, traditions, and current concepts of aesthetic and practical urbanism” (Dickinson 1951: 265).

In contrast, Paul Knox attributes the significance of cities to the centralization of authority. Cities generate and disseminate beliefs and innovations (Knox 1995); it is the space where different ideas meet, people interact, and social changes first occurred.
Today, Spanish American cities are distinguished for their particular array of elements, such as the main plaza and official buildings, representing different parts of society. However, at the beginning of the conquest of America, the Spanish Crown had no official policy regarding town planning. Spanish cities in Europe followed Moorish tradition by allowing spontaneous growth (Kinsbruner 2005). Town planning guidelines were officially introduced only at the end of the sixteenth century, almost a century after the first Spaniards set foot on American soil. This new urban plan, where the Spanish crown designated public and private spaces, was challenging to the traditional social hierarchy.

Smith argues that the ruling class manipulates public spaces; however, residents might modify their intended function by using the space for other purposes (Smith 2003). Smith also suggests that private and semipublic space is shaped by social and economic transactions. This domination of public and private spaces has also been considered in studies of cultural change. For example, Kathleen Deagan argued that in Saint Augustine, Florida, Spanish-native acculturation took place in private spaces. Saint Augustine’s inhabitants were mainly Spanish males living with native wives or servants. Deagan suggests that native women dominated private spaces, such as households, where daily activities were practiced according to the cultural background of the females. In contrast, Spanish males controlled Saint Augustine’s public spaces where less acculturation occurred (Deagan 1991).

Public spaces represented the Spanish Empire and its culture. The main plaza or market was the core of the urban center. The main plaza was the center of administrative, religious and commercial activities because all public buildings were located around it. George Kubler emphasizes that the location of the main plaza was a major concern to Spaniards since it was not only a public space, but also the center
of commercial and official events (Kubler 1985c, Smith 1955). In port cities, the plaza was to be placed near the port to facilitate the unloading and taxing of merchandise.

From the center of the town, streets and lots were assigned according to a prescribed social structure. Thus, the blocks surrounding the plaza were public buildings, such as the treasury, assembly, and customs. Even though royal regulations designated space for cathedrals in a prominent place outside the main plaza, religious buildings such as churches, cathedrals, monasteries and convents dominated the urban landscape of Spanish colonies (Smith 1955). Kinsbruner argues that religious buildings are indicators of a community’s affluence and religiosity; they tend to remain in good condition longer than other urban constructions (Kinsbruner 2005). The magnificence of religious buildings in Spanish-American colonies reflected the power of the Catholic Church and the emphasis on religious conversion.

Commercial lots for stores and merchants’ homes followed the assignment of public spaces. Before The Ordinances for the Discovery, New Settlement, and Pacification of the Indies in 1573, these lots were assigned to the first settlers of a town based on current social status. However, after 1573, the Spanish crown reserved lots for future residents and distributed them by lottery. Jay Kinsbruner suggests that the Spanish Crown was implementing an impartial system for distributing land based on equal opportunity rather than socioeconomic rank (Kinsbruner 2005). However, Susan Socolow argues that it was never a model to consider all colonial inhabitants equal. In fact, the Spanish empire recognized two types of inhabitants: vecinos and habitantes. Vecinos were those who had lived in the town for more than four years and were officially recognized as inhabitants of the town, while habitantes were people that occasionally lived in the town, but their official residences were in other
places. Many habitantes owned houses in more than one town, and while the vecinos qualified for government positions, the habitantes had limited political power and legal status as city dwellers (Socolow 1986).

The residences of both vecinos and habitantes reflected their economic and social status. They varied from mansions to modest dwellings and shacks. Although the construction of a residence reflected the social status of its owner, Kinsbruner suggests that landlords did not always inhabit them. Sometimes these houses were rented to people of lesser social and economic status, and it was common to divide the house in apartments; thus, people from different socioeconomic levels often shared the same household. For example, bachelors, or men who had their spouses in Spain, resided in these dwellings until they had enough means to send for their families or return to Spain. In addition, widowers and single women also lived in these houses, as well as some married couples (Kinsbruner 2005: 54).

George Dickinson argued that the city is the symbol and carrier of civilization because it is an institutional center. It is the seat of religious, cultural, political and administrative institutions, and the center of production, commerce, and transport (Dickinson 1951). Although town planning was not a strong aspect of the Spanish Crown at beginning of the colonial period, the Spanish administrative apparatus had apparently a defined design. Even though the structure of settlements seems defined, a settlement’s success depended on its physical and social structure. Kinsbruner argues,

“It was the town and city upon which Spanish Crown and colonizers alike depended for establishing juridical legitimation, organization of the economy, and perhaps most importantly defense of trading routes, commercial exchange, and
For this urban colonization Ferdinand and Isabel possessed a clear and precise administrative program, but not a physical one. In a fundamental way, the early conquest and colonization of the New World was undertaken without a plan for physically setting out the towns and cities that were central to the effort” (Kinsbruner 2005: 9).

Consequently, Spanish institutions had a strong design but were without the means to implement them. The resulting structures varied from place to place according to the stability of the settlement. Once again, the relation of function, form and structure is essential for the development of a town. One could suggest that the success of a town depended on the use of physical space to embody political, social and economic structures. Those towns that had chaotic physical structures were probably those that were unable to sustain Spanish institutions. Moreover, if the structure of a town (climate or buildings) was not appealing to Spaniards, it impacted the number of people wanting to settle in that particular city. If the administrative positions could not be filled, the Spanish city design would be impossible to implement.

Sixteenth-century Spanish cities in America were experimental subjects of the urbanistic ideas developed by Spain. They resulted from the implementation of Spanish ideals as well as adaptations to New World conditions. The best examples to understand the development of early cities in America are found in the Caribbean.
3.1 **Understanding Spanish American cities: archaeological models**

There were many towns founded during the first years of the colonial period in America. Their fate generally depended on their location in the trade system, and the development of a regional network to become a self-sustained settlement. The ephemeral existence of towns like La Isabela (1493-1497) and Concepción de La Vega (1492-1562) in the Dominican Republic, La Navidad (1492) and Puerto Real (1503-1579) in Haiti, Sevilla La Nueva (1509-1534) in Jamaica, Nueva Cadiz (1499-1528) in Venezuela, and San Sebastian (1509) and Santa Maria La Antigua del Darien (1510-1524) in Colombia, proves the lack of urban planning during the early expansion of the Spanish empire, and the poor judgment of the Spaniards when choosing the location of a new settlement. On the other hand, many colonial towns such as Havana (1515) in Cuba, Veracruz (1519) in Mexico, Cartagena (1533) in Colombia, Santo Domingo (1498) in the Dominican Republic, and Panama City (1519) in Panama, still exist today, thus proving that geographical location was not the sole reason for success or failure of a town. Other factors such as environmental and social conflicts have also been considered by historical archaeologists to explain this differential development and to gain a holistic understanding of the development of these settlements.

The first archaeological explorations of early colonies took place in the 1950s in sites such as Nueva Cadiz (Cruxent 1972) and Santa Maria La Antigua del Darien (Arcila Velez 1986). These early studies identified the location of the towns and proposed a general idea of the inhabitants living there. However, they overlooked the social changes that occurred when contact between natives, Europeans, and Africans was first established. Several studies during the last decades have focused on these

Different models have been proposed to explain how settlements developed, survived, or failed in colonial Spanish America. These models tend to interrelate space with social relations. The archaeological study of Spanish-American colonies has approached New World encounters from different theoretical perspectives. Some of the most important studies refer to acculturation, *mestizaje*, agency, and the creation of new identities (e.g. Deagan and Koch 1983, Zarankin 1995, Gosden 2004, Deagan and Cruxent 2002, Therrien et al. 2002). Three models, including Kathleen Deagan (Deagan and Koch 1983) study of St. Augustine, Kathleen Deagan and Jose Maria Cruxent’s (2002) study of La Isabela, and Andres Zarankin’s (1995) study of Santa Fe La Vieja, attempt to explain the development of early American settlements. These models are based on ceramic findings, in some cases native types mixed with foreign ones, and in other cases types called “mestizo” or “hybrid”, that mix native, European, and/or African features.

St. Augustine was a Spanish colony established in 1565 in Florida to expel the French from American territory, to explore other parts of Florida, and as a military post. In their study of St. Augustine, Deagan proposes that this settlement’s success was due to an adaptation system of social visibility and invisibility directly related to sex roles. Deagan concluded that in any case of cultural contact where the dominant group is composed mainly of males, the social visibility-invisibility pattern could be identified, and the adjustment of Spaniards in the New World would end with a cultural crystallization, a term taken from Steven Shepard (Shepard 1976 in Deagan 1983). This model suggests that the transmission of culture involves two screening processes: one that determines which aspects of culture will be presented, and the
other that determines which aspects of the donor culture the recipient group accepts or is forced to accept. When the solidification of the new culture occurs, incorporating certain elements and resisting others, the result is called cultural crystallization (Deagan and Koch 1983). Deagan became interested in the relationship between settlers and natives in the Spanish colonies because “Spain’s imperial expansion into the sixteenth-century Americas was simultaneously an invasion, a colonization effort, a social experiment, a religious crusade, and a highly structured economic enterprise” (Deagan 2001: 179).

Although the model established for St. Augustine seemed applicable to Puerto Real (Deagan 1995, Ewen 1991), it is problematic for La Isabela (Deagan and Cruxent 2002). La Isabela was established in 1493; the town was supposed to serve as the capital for the Spanish colonies in the New World, but a series of unfortunate circumstances caused its abandonment four years later. Though La Isabela was primarily inhabited by men and faced similar social and economic circumstances to St Augustine and Puerto Real, the archaeological evidence does not demonstrate the same social visibility and invisibility pattern. The study at La Isabela focuses on how ordinary colonists coped with the circumstances of early colonial America and changed their own cultural practices in response to them (Deagan and Cruxent 2002).

The importance of native women, suggested by Deagan in her study of St. Augustine, is also present in her study of La Isabela, but it is approached in a different manner. In this case, women are not seen as part of an acculturation mechanism, but rather as cultural brokers; they are agents responsible for a household’s success and the creation of a new identity (Deagan and Cruxent 2002). The actions of certain groups—in this case women— that somehow altered the outcome of contact situations has been defined by anthropologists as agency, that is, individual ability to create and
reproduce social structures and historical processes (Nassaney 2001). In a colonial setting, all members have a role to play in the success or failure of a settlement. Chris Gosden considers that “older views of colonies saw the colonists as dominant; we are more inclined to credit local people with agency” (Gosden 2004: 2). Spanish-Indian relations and marriages during the colonial period shaped a new social order. The concept of blood purity changed from Christian-versus-convert to Spanish (pure blood)-versus-\textit{mestizo} (mixed blood). The new Spanish-American identity developed by the colonists signified the acceptance of mixed racial categories and the evolution of the settlements.

In addition to social relations, Deagan and Cruxent (2002) analyzed the spatial distribution of La Isabela. Although the grid-plan town design became the standard for Spanish American colonies, excavations at La Isabela suggest a different design. La Isabela was dedicated to the very specific activities of a Portuguese-style trading \textit{factoria}, military occupation, and, to some extent, religious conversion (Deagan and Cruxent 2002).

Deagan and Cruxent (2002) suggest possible locations for areas of general activity within the town by correlating the distribution of buried remains with documentary accounts. All of the available documentary and archaeological evidence suggests that perceived notions of social status conditioned the spatial organization of daily life in the town, just as it conditioned nearly all kinds of social and material experiences there. Public, military, and domestic spaces were kept separate and distinct, and residential domestic areas were apparently segregated according to the status of their occupants, \textit{hidalgos} and \textit{caballeros} versus commoners. As in most Spanish towns of the period, high-status residences were located closer to the center of the town as defined by the church, plaza, and public buildings (Deagan and
Cruxent 2002: 107), while low-status residences were located on the outskirts of the town.

In contrast to previously explained models, Andres Zarankin proposes a new interpretation for the existence of mestizo types by considering the presence of Creole women in Santa Fé La Vieja in Argentina. Santa Fé La Vieja was established in 1573 as a transit point between the La Plata River, Asunción in Paraguay, and Peru. Zarankin considers Spanish American cities symbols of the transfer of a civilized Western world to another world where the urban character of its cultures had not yet manifested its full potential. Therefore, Santa Fe La Vieja was an excellent site to study the colonization and adaptation processes of the invasive cultures and their impact on local groups (Zarankin 1995). Zarankin’s spatial analysis was based on different assumptions proposed by Hoberman (1986 in Zarankin 1995) and Furlong (1946 in Zarankin 1995). Hoberman suggests that the urban social structure molded and reflected physical aspects of the city. For example, there was a symbiotic relationship between status, wealth, and use of the urban space. The localization, design, and conditions of the households, shops, churches, parks, markets, and public buildings were the physical expression of the society they served. In addition, Furlong discusses the functionality of space. One characteristic of the first sixteenth-century cities in America was the superposition or proximity of work, home, and commercial activities. In the case of artisan production, domestic and commercial activities occupied the same space. Indeed, it is possible to say that there was a multifunctional use of space (Zarankin 1995).

Zarankin studied ceramics in Santa Fe La Vieja to learn more about social interactions. After observing similarities to ceramic evidence from other early Spanish colonies in America such as Puerto Real, Zarankin explained that in Spanish
households with Spanish women, Spanish ceramics were more common, while it was rare to find them in households without Spanish women. In addition, Creole women—women born in the New World of Spanish parents—were raised and educated in the Spanish tradition; thus, they would also maintain Spanish traditions. Spanish and Creole women played a significant role in the conformation of the material culture of early settlements in America; they would teach laborers how to manufacture ceramics such as plates, jars, forks, and so on with traditional Spanish shapes (Zarankin 1995:96), creating hybrid ceramics comprised of imported shapes and local techniques.

Although the three models of Spanish-American colonial urbanization proposed by Deagan (Deagan and Koch 1983), Deagan and Cruxent (2002), and Zarankin (1995) explain many aspects of sixteenth-century Spanish settlements in America, these models cannot be applied to the Spanish fleet ports of call. The peculiarity of these city-ports sets them apart from the rest of the sixteenth-century cities in America.

There were two big groups of ports-of-call in sixteenth-century Spanish America, one in the Pacific and one in the Caribbean. On the Pacific coast the main ports were Panama City, Valparaiso, Guayaquil, Callao, and Acapulco, while in the Atlantic the ports were Nombre de Dios or Portobelo, Cartagena, Havana, and Veracruz. These two groups of ports are different because of their trading network. Some of the Pacific ports had links with Asian ports and others depended on Caribbean ports such as Cartagena and Nombre de Dios. For the purpose of this study, I will focus on early colonial Caribbean ports.
3.2 **Sixteenth Century Caribbean City-Ports**

Many of the early Spanish American cities were ports connecting Spain with its colonies. Himanshu Ray describes ports as a “complex interplay of physical, geographical and socioeconomic phenomena” (Ray 1996:2). Furthermore, Smith explains that ports, with their flexible political environment, often facilitate contact between different groups to achieve commercial gain (Smith 2003). Thus, the economic and social life of a community is intimately linked to its port. Alejandro de la Fuente explains that “what makes a port city is the overwhelming influence of the port and its functions on the lives, occupations, opportunities, and experiences of the local community” (de la Fuente 2008: 6). Furthermore, de la Fuente suggests that to study a port, it is necessary to consider its relationship with the wider world because

“...Connections to that wider world [Europe and Asia] took place at a more intimate level: colonial residents were part of that world, and many of their ideas, expectations, and consumption habits had been shaped by it. As they tried to organize colonial societies or adapt to new conditions, they had little choice but to turn to their home cultures for inspiration and information. From Europe the Americas may have looked like a new world, but from the vantage point of the colonies, key elements of society and culture looked hardly new. Furthermore, connections with the world economy and the world’s cultures were renovated through the thousands of passengers, seamen, slaves, adventurers, merchants, and bureaucrats of various origins who came to town each year aboard the fleets” (De la Fuente 2008: 9).
Port cities, such as the Caribbean ports of the sixteenth century, experienced a constant flux of population. The existence of these cities revolved around trade, shipping, and the sea, rather than production activities. During the sixteenth century, there were four port cities that played a leading role in Spanish Atlantic commerce: Havana, Veracruz, Cartagena, and Nombre de Dios. Although these ports had similar political and economic characteristics, Havana should be excluded from this group. Havana became important because of its geographic location and its defensible bay. This port was never meant to introduce merchandise to the American colonies but rather to supply the fleets before leaving for Spain. Spanish ships completed their cargoes in Havana with products that had been brought from other American colonies. At the same time, excess inventories of European manufactures and other commodities were left in town to be redistributed to regional markets (de la Fuente 2008).

In contrast to Havana's main function as a naval supplier and shipyard, Cartagena, Veracruz, and Nombre de Dios were all distributors of European goods and collectors of American products. In the following pages, I will discuss the ports of Cartagena and Veracruz based on four principal aspects: nature of the foundation of the city and advantages of its location, urban growth, development of regional networks, and composition of the population living in the port. These four aspects shaped the form and structure of these ports.

**Cartagena: Tierra Firme's ideal port**

Cartagena was founded in 1533 as a result of prevailing winds, the need of a stable starting point for explorations, and the ideal conditions of its bay (Vidal Ortega
2002). The bay is sheltered from the open sea by a set of islands, which limit access to the city by creating two entrances: Bocagrande and Bocachica. The Bocagrande access was initially used as the main entry to the bay until a shipwreck in the middle of the sixteenth century blocked this access. Afterwards, Bocachica became the only entrance to the port (Figure 3.1). These changes in landscape affected the location of defensive structures such as forts.

Cartagena was established on top of the native town of Calamari. The huts of the native town became the center of the Spanish settlement. During the first years of its existence, Cartagena grew without a real urbanistic design; only decades later some regulations were introduced (Vidal Ortega 2002). However, Carmen Borrero Pla suggests that the urbanistic model followed in Cartagena is called a 'regular model of two plazas' which was integrated by the same components that shaped the classic grid model (Borrego Pla 1983). Nevertheless, neither the layout nor the location of urban elements, such as plazas and official buildings, reflect rigidity, instead they suggest an organic urban growth. This spontaneous development is exemplified by the creation of a second plaza. The city was known for an ill environment, which was in part caused by the existence of a swamp. In 1570, the governor of Cartagena decided to fill the swamp with lime and stone so that the space could be used as a defense point and to unload shipments. This space became known as the Plaza del Mar. The commercial character of this plaza was reaffirmed with the presence of the aduana [customs], the Casa de Contratacion [House of Trade], the butchery, and other shops. In contrast, the role of the Plaza Mayor was considered more social and bureaucratic because the cabildo [municipal council] building was located there. Official buildings were built at the end of the century, as is the case of
Perhaps the late construction of these buildings is due to the commercial origin of the city and the change in urban regulations after 1573.

Another example of organic growth in the urban plan of the city is the location of religious structures. In Cartagena, as in many other Spanish colonies, it was common to have to rebuild and transfer buildings around the town. For example, Cartagena's cathedral was first built in 1534 far from the Plaza Mayor. Most of the building was straw and cane except for the main chapel and the choir, which were built with lime, plaster, bricks, tiles, and carved wood. The building materials reflect the colonists' limited access to permanent construction materials and labor. In 1552, the cathedral burned down. In 1573, it was partially rebuilt and moved closer to the cabildo, and its construction was finally finished in 1615. The final construction of
the building similar to a strong fortress was perhaps the result of availability of materials and laborers, and escalating pirate threats. Trade with Africa had greatly increased at the end of the sixteenth century, and Cartagena was one of the most important slave markets in Tierra Firme. Also, the works of Baptista Antonelli towards the fortification of Spanish American ports influenced Catagena's architecture.

In contrast to its monumental religious and administrative constructions, the Spanish houses of Cartagena were mostly humble. They were made with reeds, plastered with mud, and covered with a straw roof. However, as the city grew wealthier and the danger of fire increased, buildings constructed of stone and mortar became more common. By 1625, Cartagena's population had risen to fifteen hundred Spanish householders. By then, the center of the city was nearly all built of stone and brick, and was surrounded by a wall with forts to defend the channel that gave access to the port.

In addition to official, religious, and domestic constructions, the urban landscape had a large number of defensive structures. The continual threat of pirate attacks led to the construction of two forts, the first at Bocagrande, and a later one at Bocachica (Figure 3.2). Anchoring ships far from the city further strengthened the city's defense against pirate attacks. Canoes were used to transport merchandise and passengers to and from the harbor. This was considered inconvenient, but it prevented buccaneers from attacking the city by surprise (Borrego Pla 1983).

Population growth is an important factor that shapes a city's development. The population of Cartagena included European soldiers and adventurers, natives from dismantled groups trying to adapt to a new society, and enslaved Africans (Vidal Ortega 2002). By 1574, forty years after its foundation, Cartagena had a
population of two hundred and fifty Spanish householders in addition to several thousand Africans and natives. Native population was crucial for the establishment of Cartagena. In fact, because of the limited supply of construction materials and the absence of Spanish residents with skills related to construction, native huts were the first houses inhabited by the Spanish. However, during the first decades after occupation, the native population diminished in the region due to diseases and exploitation, which in turn stimulated the African slave trade. Cartagena was known to have one of the largest slave markets in Spanish America. The increase of African population led to the appearance of maroon settlements around the city as early as 1588 when an expedition was organized to capture and punish runaways (Vidal Ortega 2002). The problem with maroons did not disappear during the colonial period, and in fact, the region of Cartagena is known for the existence of one of the
largest maroon groups in America. Today, there is still a high concentration of African descendants surrounding the city, especially in towns such as Palenque.

Although the number of inhabitants in the port was continuously growing, the ill environment of the city detrimentally affected them. The city’s humidity, the *cienagas* [swamps] around the city, and the limited supply of fresh water encouraged the spread of diseases. In an effort to improve the conditions of the city, in 1565 a project to build a channel from Turbaco, south of the city, was approved but it was never finished (Vidal Ortega 2002).

The physical and demographic growth of the city resulted from the economic stability of the port. Commercial relations were not limited to transatlantic trade. Initially, the port’s economy was based on exports of gold from the hinterland, but the quantity of precious metals, mostly from grave-robbing in these years, diminished after 1550. Thus, Cartagena had to turn to agriculture and cattle farming, and trade with mining camps from farther inland to survive. However, the area of the town was not ideal for these activities, and the town was conceived as a commercial rather than an agricultural center. During the second half of the sixteenth century, the established route for the Spanish fleet caused a structural reorganization of the regional space of the Caribbean, from a commercial and productive point of view, moving from an economy of plundering to an economy of livestock and agriculture, partly to provision the fleets, but also to support new urban populations, creating an internal flux of products within the colonies (Vidal Ortega 2002: 68).

Cartagena's agriculture focused on maize and manioc and the breeding of pigs, all of which depended on native or African labor (Borrego Pla 1983). Surplus crops were used to supply the fleets and exported to the Panama Isthmus. Around 1570, Cartagena became a provider for Panama and Nicaragua of products such as
corn, pigs, ham, cheese and butter, soap, and slaves. At the same time, Santa Marta, Riohacha, and other New Granada towns and villages sent leather, meats, tobacco, sugar, molasses, wool, salt, cows, and chickens to Cartagena (Vidal Ortega 2002). These imports and exports, in addition to agriculture and stockbreeding turned Cartagena into a self-sustain settlement. During the seventeenth century, many types of regional trade among American colonies were restricted; however, there are records of ships from Cuba, Jamaica, and Santo Domingo arriving in Cartagena with clothing and Chinese silk.

In addition to Caribbean trade, Cartagena had a privileged location for trading with other southern colonies through the Magdalena River. The Magdalena River allowed the transportation of merchandise to the interior of Nueva Granada and as far as Quito, capital of modern Ecuador. The other route to Quito and Peru, via the Panamanian Isthmus and Pacific Sea, was usually preferred. At times, however, pirate attacks and maroon raids made the Magdalena route economical despite its difficulty (Smith 1968).

The easy defense of the port and its capacity to harbor numerous ships converted Cartagena into one of the most important commercial ports of the Spanish Main. Its location as an entrance point to Nueva Granada and Peru allowed a regional network to develop, creating a semi-autonomous system that produced a stable and well-fed market, and stimulated the urban development which changed the appearance of the city (Vidal Ortega 2002:75). Access to merchandise from around the world and the protection offered by the bay were the main reasons for inhabitants to stay in the port. Cartagena prevailed over sites on the north coast of Panama as an urban and commercial center for three reasons: first, health conditions in Nombre de Dios were worse than conditions in Cartagena; second, Cartagena provided a fast and
easy connection with the Antilles due to favorable navigation winds; and third, Cartagena also provided a connection with southern mineral producers such as Potosi.

**Veracruz: ‘the door to Mexico’**

In contrast to Cartagena’s trade origins, Veracruz was founded in 1519 by Hernan Cortés to maintain a coastal base in New Spain while his expedition moved to Mexico City. It became the seat of royal power before Tenochtitlán (Mexico City) was conquered, and the only legal port of entry into Mexico for three centuries (Figure 3.3). This port functioned as a military and naval base, sentry post, customs house, and revenue collector for the Crown (Jimenez Codinach 1994).

![Figure 3.3: Map of Veracruz from 1632 by Nicolas Cardona](http://www.armada15001900.net/lamayorrutatransoceanica.htm)
Even though Veracruz played a leading role in the commerce of New Spain, this fact alone was insufficient to stimulate Veracruz's urban growth. The growth of the city was very slow during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Travelers' descriptions from different periods relate the city's lack of infrastructure. For example, a sketch from the end of the sixteenth century by Baptista Antonelli—the well-known architect of colonial Spanish forts in America—shows how the architectural structures of Veracruz had hardly changed since conquest. In 1697, the Italian Carreri described Veracruz as poor and lightly populated by Africans and mulattoes. The slow growth of the city was still evident in the early nineteenth century when Humbolt visited the port. He described a city lacking running water with an ill environment caused by suffocating heat, marshy grounds, and stagnant waters (Jimenez Codinach 1994).

The ill environment of Veracruz was widely known. Travelers of the sixteenth century continually warned their family and friends about the conditions of the port. For example, Alvaro Zambrano wrote to Juan Marin in Spain “…Veracruz is so dangerous that from 300 passengers that arrived in six ships 200 have died…” ¹ Also, Pedro Gomez de Montejo wrote to his father in Spain regarding his farther’s passage through Veracruz “…leave Veracruz because it is ill land, and do not stop there, if it is possible, for an hour…” ² Except for these few descriptions of the city, little is known regarding the environment, buildings and layout of sixteenth century Veracruz.

The European population living permanently in the town during the sixteenth century was small given the prominent role Veracruz played in the commercial

¹ "...Veracruz tan peligroso que de 300 pasajeros que en seis navios llegaron se han muerto los 200..." (Mexico 20.I.1558 in Carta 3, Enrique Otte 1993: 40).
² "...en la Veracruz sea despachado, porque es tierra enferma, y no se detenga allí, si fuere posible, una hora..." (Mexico 15.XI.1594 in Carta 125, Enrique Otte 1993: 129).
system. Alejandro de la Fuente, regarding the size of the city, considers Veracruz “a relatively minor urban settlement despite functioning as virtually the sole transoceanic port for the viceroyalty of New Spain” (de la Fuente 2008: 224). The town had only four hundred householders in the 1620s compared to three hundred and fifty in 1570. In contrast, Pablo Pérez Mallaina considers these numbers representative of a rapid population growth (Pérez Mallaina 1998). Despite the relatively large number of householders and the construction rate of dwellings, we need to keep in mind that owning a house in a town did not mean that the owner lived in it permanently, if at all. The seasonal flow of commerce through the port gave an episodic character to Veracruz with periods of high occupancy and other periods of desolation. It appears that the Spanish only inhabited the town when the fleet was in port; the rest of the time they were in Mexico City, Jalapa, and other inland towns. In the case of Veracruz, the large number of houses could be the result of the need to accommodate the large numbers of merchants, seamen, and travelers staying in the port during the trade fairs.

Besides a large number of houses, Veracruz had massive defensive structures. In 1565, the fort of San Juan de Ulúa was built on an island overlooking the port (Figure 3.4); this defensive system was successful enough to trap the English pirate Sir John Hawkins in 1568, and defend the port later on.

Ill, wounded, and older men unable to participate in expeditions were the initial Spanish inhabitants of Veracruz, but Spanish expansion in America depended on the exploitation of native communities (Meyer and Sherman 1995). The large quantity of native groups in the area contributed to the survival of Spaniards living in Veracruz. In addition to the native groups, Veracruz and San Juan de Ulúa had a large enslaved African population. As in other colonies, the large number of slaves in
the city resulted in the establishment of maroon settlements around the town, causing safety problems within the city and along caminos [roads] communicating to Mexico City and Acapulco.

Its slow urban growth does not change the fact that Veracruz was an essential commercial and administrative port for Spain; it was the unchallenged channel for merchandise arriving in New Spain and the exportation of Mexican products to Europe (Jimenez Codinach 1994). It was also the main re-export point for goods from China that had come to Acapulco from Manila. When the Spanish fleet arrived in Veracruz, it became the center of the trade fairs of New Spain, thus stimulating the economic growth of the city. However, this intense commercial activity ceased abruptly when the fleet left the port, after which the city fell into a stagnation stage because merchants and visitors as well as commodities left town until the next trade fair. Even though Veracruz was the heart of the Mexican commerce and controlled access to Pacific trade by regulating the roads to Acapulco, the commercial houses were located in Mexico City and only a few representatives of the trade houses lived permanently in Veracruz (Vidal Ortega 2002).

The episodic character of the city described above, as well as its intermittent access to supplies, led it to develop regional relations with other American colonies. Agriculture in Veracruz was practically nonexistent; the land was used mainly for cattle, and food was expensive and limited. Local industry consisted of salted fish for the fleets and garrison, and the exportation of hides to Spain (Jimenez Codinach 1994). The development of a regional commercial network was essential to the port’s survival and led Veracruz to become one of the suppliers of the fleets arriving in Havana. The port acquired goods from inland settlements and exported products such as wheat, corn flour, biscuits, chickpeas, lentils, cheese, and ham to Cuba. Together
with Yucatan, Veracruz became one of the most important provisioners of the fleets in Havana and frontier garrisons such as Florida (De la Fuente 2008). Veracruz’s exports included European products left over from its trade fairs, and Asian products from Manila, while Yucatan’s exports consisted of products locally produced that in some cases, such as the dyewood *palo de campeche*, were re-exported to Europe.

### 3.3 Summary

The Spanish concept of city was at the core of an urban rather than rural strategy to colonize America. The holistic Renaissance concept of city served as a tool and symbol to transform the landscape of America. The colonial Spanish American city not only imposed a new physical organization of space but also carried a humanist meaning through the concept of *policía*. Spanish residents, especially
vecinos, were members of communities and they were supposed to subordinate their desires to the well being of the community. The success of the Spanish urban strategy was evinced when the conquistadores and soldiers became citizens of a colony through a foundational ceremony and the establishment of a municipal council. The citizens worked towards the success of their city and their well being.

Even though the Spanish idea of city was a strong base for the colonization of America, Spanish American cities were affected by many other aspects that influenced their development (Figure 3.5). For example, native presence was decisive in attracting immigration and influential in the Spanish settlement pattern, at least at the beginning of the colonial period. Three models have been proposed to understand the development of Spanish colonial cities. However, they do not explain

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 3.5: Factors influencing the development of colonial Spanish cities.**
the development of Spanish American ports of call in the Caribbean. City ports were located in strategic locations for transportation and trading instead of strategic points to legitimate the power of the Crown and continue their religious crusade. These were fundamentally pragmatic choices.

After reviewing the nature of foundation, urban growth, population composition, and commercial networks of both Cartagena and Veracruz, it is possible to identify two different urban developments, even though they shared several similar characteristics. On one hand, Cartagena developed a support system that not only allowed it to survive the commercial system imposed by Spain, but led it to play a leading role in the trade between inland Spanish colonies and Europe. On the other hand, Veracruz developed a support system not to enter the commercial web, but to maintain a population in the town due to the episodic nature of the port. Both ports developed a strong commercial structure based on regional relations, which secured their survival at the same time that it shaped their physical development.

The study of Nombre de Dios will complete the analysis of sixteenth century Caribbean ports of call. Although Nombre de Dios shared urban characteristics with both Cartagena and Veracruz, its fate was different. Its final outcome will help us to understand the crucial role of commercial and administrative structures, and the importance of cultural interactions and regional networks to secure the survival of a settlement. In the following two chapters, I will explain the case of Nombre de Dios, based on archival documents and archaeological evidence, to define the type of development of this peculiar town and achieve a better understanding of its fate.
Chapter IV: 
The Unknown History of Nombre de Dios

Although the port town of Nombre de Dios played an important role in the Caribbean's colonial history, few studies have focused on the history of the settlement per se. Moreover, these studies limit their information to general facts that affected the settlement, such as the ill environment of the town, its commercial role in Spanish American trading network, and the corruption of the port officials. In contrast, the results presented in this chapter are the product of extensive archival research undertaken in the last five years in the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid, the Archivo Nacional de Panama in Panama City, and the Archivo General de la Nación in Bogota.

The documents analyzed in this chapter are lawsuits, government reports, testaments, and letters written by the Nombre de Dios Cabildo [town council], the Audiencia de Panama, the Spanish Crown, and residents from Nombre de Dios. Despite the large number of documents found, many others were lost, especially those from the Nombre de Dios Cabildo and the Audiencia de Panama that were kept in Panama City. The documents found today in the archives in Panama City are copies of documents stored in the Archivo General de Indias.

Even though I examined hundreds of documents, there are many others that have been studied by colonial historians focusing in other colonies but have information related to Nombre de Dios. Of all the historical studies that refer to Nombre de Dios, only two have been solely dedicated to the town. Laurentino Díaz López's Nombre de Dios: La ciudad de la altiva cerviz attempts to relate a detailed
history of the town, but the information presented does not differ from the general facts already known about the port (Díaz López 2001). In contrast, John Thrower, founding member of The Drake Exploration Society, published an article proposing a possible distribution of buildings at the height of the development of the town (Thrower 2001, 2005).

From the historical studies related to the region of Panama, María del Carmen Mena García and Carol Jopling are good sources to understand the regional context and its impact on the development of Nombre de Dios. Mena García explored different aspects of colonial Panama ranging from slavery and creolization to commercial and government structures (Mena García 1984, 1992). A good compilation of archival documents relating to Panama is found in Carol Jopling’s *Indios y negros en Panama en los siglos XVI y XVII* (1994). Finally, there are many small articles written about Panamanian’s maroon movements during the sixteenth century, and many references to the port as part of the commercial system of the colonial period (Romoli 1953, Borrego Pla 1983, Ward 1993, Pérez-Mallaina 1998, among others).

The archival documents I analyzed in conjunction with historical studies helped me to illustrate a more complete image of the town. In this chapter, I will discuss the documentary information regarding the physical aspect of the town, its demographics, its government structures, and finally, the commercial life and problems resulting from the town’s central role in the New World’s trading system.
4.1 Aspect of the city: surroundings and buildings

Even though the town developed slowly, on December 7 1537, King Carlos I granted the title of city and an armorial bearing or seal (Figure 4.1) to Nombre de Dios with the following description:

"Item for the city of Nombre de Dios with a coat of arms where the setting is celestial blue with a port where there is a ship over blue waters and with its sails closed and anchored with a flag on the mast of the ship and a gold fortress on the port from the main tower there is a square red flag adorned with gold and in the middle a royal gold crown and on the edge of the shield gold letters on a red background that says NOMEN NEVM FOVEAT ME [on my name help me] and a crowned lion holding the shield and hanging from its neck a golden ribbon signed and sent by the kings". 1

The coat of arms assigned by the king describes the function and importance of the town for the Spanish Empire. However, this promising future was shattered by different factors, the challenging disease environment being the most well-known.

Weather and environment were two of the key factors that dictated many urban characteristics of the town. Weather played an important role in scheduling the

1 AGI Lima 565 L2\1\333 verso. 1537. "Item para la ciudad de Nombre de Dios con un escudo que el campo sea celeste con un puerto de mar en que aya una nao sobre unas aguas azules surta al puerto y cogidas sus velas y echadas sus ancoras con una vandera encima de la gauia de la dicha nao y una fortaleza de oro sobre el dicho puerto que de la torre principal y omenaje della salga una vandera quadrada teñida de colorado orlada de oro que en el medio della este una corona de oro real y por orla del dicho escudo ciertas letras de oro en campo colorado que diga NOMEN NEVM FOVEAT ME [en mi nombre protegeme] y por timble y divisa un leon coronado que tenga abrazado el dicho escudo y colgado del cuello con una cinta de oro firmado y remitido de los dichos sus reyes"
Figure 4.1: Drawing of the coat of arms based on original description and on Díaz López (2001).

fleets' departure from Spain to the New World. The fleet to Tierra Firme was scheduled to leave Spain in July or August, thus arriving at Cartagena and Nombre de Dios after the rainy season to avoid epidemics (Pérez-Mallaina 1998). Today, Nombre de Dios is still known for long rainy seasons that flood the fields and only January to March are months with dry weather. Even though the fleets were scheduled to arrive during the short dry season, there are reports from 1563 of lost ships and drowned people during storms and intense winds lashing the bay. In 1575, Alonso de Criado de Castilla wrote:

"...eighteen leagues away from Panama City there is Nombre de Dios, port of the North Sea... this port is not safe and dangerous"
when the north winds run, many ships have been lost and an entire fleet, like happened in the year of [fifteen] sixty five when Aguayo was the fleet general, and a year a go [1574] three galleons and two ships...”\(^3\)

In addition to bad weather, thick jungle vegetation, and the mountainous and swamy nature of the bay proved to be challenging for the settlers. In 1537, the Cabildo of Nombre de Dios asked the Crown for funds to repair buildings and clear forest and thickets.\(^4\) Still in 1557 and 1561 the dense vegetation was an issue. In 1557, the Cabildo reported undertaking forest clearings so the population would not get sick and would allow pastures to grow for the maintenance of cattle.\(^5\) However, in 1561, the Cabildo said that the town was one of the most ill towns in the colonies because of its natural setting. Since the town was very poor, they asked for funds to clear vegetation so that the health of the people in town would improve and the maroons would not be able to hide in areas surrounding the city.\(^6\) Thus, clearing the forest around the town would allowed circulation of healthy winds in the city, grow pastures for cattle, and decreased cover for maroons.

At the end of the century, the Cabildo described the existence of pastures and a city clear of forest and thickets (Mena García 1992). The changes in the landscape

\(^3\) Nombre de Dios, May 7 1575. Sumaria descripción del reino de Tierra Firme, llamado Castilla del Oro, que está sujeto a la real audiencia de la ciudad de Panamá, por el Alonso Criado de Castilla, oidor decano de la misma. In Jopling 1994:11. “...a diez y ocho leguas de la ciudad de Panama está la del Nombre de Dios, puerto del Mar del Norte... es el puerto poco seguro y muy peligroso cuando corren vientos nortes, con que se han perdido muchos navios y una flota entera, como sucedió en el año de sesenta y cinco siendo general de la flota Aguayo, y de un año a esta parte tres galeones y dos navios,...”

\(^4\) AGI Panama L6/1/271. 1537.

\(^5\) ANP Cartas y expedientes de los cabildos de Nombre de Dios Portobelo y Veragua. Estante 69, cajon 2, legajo 1. 1557. Petición que hace el Concejo de Nombre de Dios pidiendo mercedes al Rey para el sostenimiento de la población.

\(^6\) AGI Signatura\AGI\Panama 236 L9/1/708. 1561
not only affected the density of the vegetation but also the bay. Although the bay was wide and capable of holding many ships, inhabitants noticed changes "...the port is big and capable, although the depth, it is said, is diminishing...".\(^7\) Perhaps deforestation contributed to silting up the bay. These concerns seem justified since today the shoreline in Nombre de Dios is north of the sixteenth century coastline.

Finally, the town lacked a reliable fresh water source. The *Cabildo* proposed bringing a river to the city, which involved a great deal of engineering. In 1557, the *Cabildo* reported that the money allocated for this enterprise was spent but the problem remained unsolved.\(^8\) This is the only surviving report concerning fresh water sources in Nombre de Dios. However, archaeological excavations suggest this problem was likely diminished with the construction of wells.

The descriptions of the town found in historical overviews lack salient details. However, John Thrower (2001) has recreated a conjectural distribution of the official buildings based on Drake and Antonelli’s description of the town, and the maps from Vaca de Castro and the so called Drake Manuscript, a late sixteenth-century French source. Based on these documents, Thrower illustrated the location of certain buildings in reference to the plaza. For example, the church to the west, the Treasure house to the northeast, the Governor’s house or Contaduría to the southeast, the Casa de Contratación to the south (Thrower 2001, 2006). Although some of the buildings drawn in the map below are identified in town descriptions, many others are included to follow the typical Spanish town’s urban components (Figure 4.2).

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\(^7\) Nombre de Dios 1575 in Jopling 1994:17. "... el puerto es grande y capaz, aunque el fondo dicen que se disminuye..."

\(^8\) ANP Cartas y expedientes de los cabildos de Nombre de Dios Portobelo y Veragua. Estante 69, cajon 2, legajo 1. 1557. Petición que hace el Concejo de Nombre de Dios pidiendo mercedes al Rey para el sostenimiento de la población.
The only two known maps of Nombre de Dios from the colonial period are from Spanish and French sources. In 1541, the Licenciado Vaca de Castro drew the main features of the town: reefs on each side of the bay, El Morro on the east side of the town, two mouths of the Nombre de Dios River, a Casa de Contratación in the southwest of the town, and the entrance of the Camino Real to the southeast of the town. Curiously, this map lacks a plaza and a church (Figure 4.3).

The second map is found in the Histoire Naturelle des Indies (a. k. a. the Drake Manuscript). Apparently, it dates from the 1570s when Sir Francis Drake was exploring the Caribbean coast. Even though many suggest that the Drake Manuscript drawings are the result of hearsay, it is likely that the Frenchman who drew the map and wrote the accompanying description was a member of Drake’s expedition and he might have visited the town since Drake attacked the region, including the town, several times during that decade. The Drake Manuscript map includes a description of the town:

“This is a beautiful and spacious harbor having a depth of seven to eight fathoms of water in which the fleet of ships from Spain arrives to trade merchandise with those from Peru which is located in a mountainous region where the air is heavy and unhealthy and the Spaniard cannot live there for a long time. For this reason, because they are not used and accustomed to the air of the country, it is advisable that these Spaniards abstain from wine without water and from eating oranges on account of the high fevers which are common there...” (Histoire Naturelle des Indies 1996: 266, f97-97v).
Figure 4.2: Map by John Thrower (personal communication 2005. A similar version can be found in Thrower 2001)

Figure 4.3: 1541 map of Nombre de Dios by Licenciado Vaca de Castro (image taken from the original map located in the INAC offices).
The description continues with references to the transportation of merchandise through the Camino Real, the hardships of the Camino, and the maroon threats.

The Drake Manuscript map provides architectural details and records the approximate size of the town (Figure 4.4). The map shows that the buildings in the town used different materials, which suggest different access to construction supplies. The grid suggested by the drawing follows the shape of the bay. Finally, there is one building that differs from the rest in size; this building may be the governor’s house or the church. It is likely to be the church because the long building is next to a small building which could represent the bell tower. Furthermore, the governor’s house, according to Drake’s description from 1572, had some type of gate to keep the mules inside. There are some identifiable errors in the map such as the absence of El Morro [The Mole], the location of the Camino Real, and the location of the plaza. El Morro was already recognized as a landmark in the colony not only because it was drawn in Vaca de Castro’s map but also because it is mentioned in several archival documents, and, until a couple of years ago, was still standing in the town. Drake’s map shows a road leading straight from the mountains to the beach. However, descriptions of Nombre de Dios illustrate the existence of different streets in the town, and place the entrance of the Camino Real into the city from the southeast of the plaza, and not from the south of the town straight to the beach. In Drake’s map, the plaza is located on the beach, but descriptions of the town, including Drake’s from 1572, clearly locate the Casa de Contratación between the beach and the plaza. Furthermore, another detail missing in Drake’s map is the distinction in construction materials. Archival documents discussed in the following section describe the existence of two stone buildings in the town as opposed to only thatch and mud constructions.
Figure 4.4: Map from the Histoire Naturelle des Indies [a.k.a. Drake Manuscript] (Histoire Naturelle Des Indies 1996: f97-f97v).
Building techniques and materials

There are few references to sources of construction materials for the city. The first report known is from 1541 when the Crown granted relief on taxes on imported construction materials for two years. Among the materials included in the tax relief are: wood, lime, plaster, nails, and bricks. By 1548, the cabildo reported that there were imported bricks and roof tiles, and wood from the mountains to make houses. However, the availability of construction materials did not mean that the inhabitants used them in the construction of their houses. In 1585, Juan López de Velasco described between 150 and 200 houses in the town made of wood, even though there was enough stone, lime, and tile for construction (Pérez-Mallaina 1998). Perhaps the monetary value of the construction materials was too high for the population to use in their residences, or perhaps a large number of house owners were floating residents who were not interested in spending large quantities of money in the construction of houses that would remain unoccupied most of the year, and require continual repairs because of the inclement weather. There may have simply been a better market for these materials in Panama City. Either way, in 1596, two descriptions of the town mention the existence of houses made of wood and straw. In addition, one of the descriptions distinguishes between two types of construction: bohios and casas. Although the description does not specify the difference, it suggests that the difference lies in the construction materials rather than forms. Even though bohio

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9 AGI Panama 235 L7\1\424. 1541.
10 AGI Panama 32 N4\1\1. 1548
11 AGI Panama 32 N22\1\41. 1596. Consideraciones de Don Alonso de Sotomayor Vuestro Presidente de la Real Audiencia de Panama para el traslado de Nombre de Dios a San Felipe de Puertobelo.
12 British Library, Add MS 13977, f 163-167. Relacion del Temerario y Lastimoso Yncendio que ubo en la ciudad del Nombre de Dios de Reyno de Tierra Firme, Martes trece de agosto de Nobenta y seis anos.
was a term of native origin, by the end of the sixteenth century it was applied to many thatch-roof dwellings with forms that were not necessarily indigenous. The description relates a fire in the town. While the fire rapidly spread between the *bohios*, a brick wall from a *casa* stopped the fire from spreading to one part of the town.

Another type of construction found in Nombre de Dios was the barracks built by the fleets.13 During the trade fairs, it seems, appraisal of imported merchandise was a slow process, and to speed the unloading ships, the fleets built barracks on the beach to protect the merchandise from the weather. These temporary, tent-like constructions are also shown in the Drake Manuscript map, implying that these barracks were habitually used for some years.

**Fortress and defense structures**

According to the documentary record, one of the most controversial matters in the history of the town was the construction of a fortress to defend the port. In 1537, the Crown ordered the construction of the fortress and assigned the bishop Tomas de Berlanga to organize a group of people to decide where the best place was for its construction.14 Even though the Crown confirmed this order twice in 1538, assigned Pascual de Andagoya to oversee the construction, and authorized funds from the *Real Hacienda* [Royal Treasury] to pay for materials and labor, the construction had not started by 1539.15 In 1540, the Crown learned that Andagoya had left Panama City to explore western Colombia, but still ordered him or anyone else in his place to start the

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13 ANP Tomo 1 Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Panama, 1573-1609. Estante 109, cajon 1, legajo 1. 1574.
14 AGI Panama 235 L6\1\247. 1537
15 AGI Guatemala 401 L3\1\82 and AGI Panama 236 L6\1\394. 1538. AGI Panama 235 L7\1\96. 1539.
Four times between 1537 and 1556 the Crown mandated the construction of the fortress but it never happened. In 1541, the Nombre de Dios Cabildo reported three possible locations for the fortress: on a reef north of the town, on Nicuesa hill a quarter of a league (ca. 1200 meters) south from the town, or at El Morro de Sierra. At the same time the Cabildo wrote about the disadvantages of each location. For example, the Nicuesa hill was surrounded by rivers that tend to flood, and El Morro de Sierra was hard to defend because of its location. In 1544, even though the Crown had previously authorized funds for the construction, the Cabildo asked for 30 or 40 slaves, stonemasons, and lime from Santo Domingo. In 1556, the Crown ordered the fortress to be built on the reef north of town, specifying that it should hold artillery and have an aljibe [cistern] that could hold 1500 pitchers. Also, the walls were to be 20 feet wide and 25 varas [yards] high, the main square of the castle was to have 100 feet on a side, and the castle was to have a chamber for the major. Even though the fortress's location was already chosen and its specifications given by the Crown, in 1561 the governor of Panama wrote that he was looking for the best place to build the fortress. He claimed the best location was not too close to the town. The last reference to a fortress appears in 1568 when the Cabildo acknowledged the order and need to build the fortress. Although the fortress was never built, according to historian Mena García, in the 1550s, Governor Sancho Clavijo ordered the construction of a bastion or earthen stockade along the beach to repel French attacks. The construction took three months but the results were

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16 AGI Panama 235 L7\1\254. 1540.
17 AGI Patronato 194 R6\1\3
18 AGI Panama 32 N2\1\1
19 AGI Signatura\AGI\Panama 236 L9\1\404. 1556. Memorial de la firma y ___ y se ha de hacer el castillo en el arrecife del Nombre de Dios.
21 AGI Panama 236 L10\1\260
temporary since they used perishable materials such as wood, cane, and mud. After ten years, the Crown ordered the Viceroy of Peru, Francisco de Toledo, to build the fortress in the town, which presumably means the bastion was no longer there (Mena Garcia 1992).

Apparently, the population of Nombre de Dios relied on other means to defend the town. In 1538, when the Crown ordered the construction of the fortress, it also authorized the distribution of arms among the population; however, the acquisition of arms was not free of charge. The Crown mandated that Pascual de Andagoya distribute crossbows, harquebus, spears, swords, and bucklers to the residents that did not have arms and charge them a fair price. However, these arms never reached the town because Andagoya never followed the order. Furthermore, in 1544, the Cabildo asked the Crown for arms and ammunition. In 1572, the townsmen were allegedly preparing the top of El Morro to hold a cannon to defend the coast,

“Capt. Drake...went with the rest to view the town and especially a mount, where he was the year before informed that some cannon was designed to have been planted, which might fourour round about the town; but upon his arrival there was not a gun, only the place seemed prepared for that purpose” (Wright 1932:10).

22 AGI Panama 236 L6\1\393 Para que se repartan las bellestas entrelo vecinos que nolas tuvieren. 1538. “Los vecinos que en la ciudad del Nombre de Dios residieren es cosa muy necesaria tengan vallestas y arcabuzes bien aderezados y lanzas y espa da y rodelas, y las otras armas necesarias para guarda y defensa de la dicha ciudad...vos mando que las armas que el dicho Pascual de Andagoya llevar para el efecto suso dicho las repartase entre los vecinos de la dicha ciudad del Nombre de Dios que nolas tuvieren y lo que llevar por fe que le costaron y pago de flete hagais que se lo paguen las personas a quien ansí repartiereis las dicha armas con la ganancia que os pareciere moderada...”
23 AGI Panama 32 N2\1\1. 1544.
A cannon was apparently acquired after Drake’s attack in 1572. In 1994, John Thrower took a picture of the remains of a cannon on top of El Morro in Nombre de Dios. Unfortunately, both the cannon and El Morro were lost a few years later by looting and mining activities.

**Public structures and buildings**

Another necessary structure that was never built for the town was a pier, and commercial activities suffered because of this absence of a platform to unload merchandise. According to María del Carmen Borrego Pla, the first pier built was in 1539, and rebuilt in 1562 (Borrero Pla 1983). However, the first reference I found regarding the pier dates from 1560 when the Cabildo claimed that the lack of a platform to unload merchandise was the cause of many illnesses. Many documents mention that the sailors had to load and unload merchandise by jumping in the water and pulling the merchandise to the beach, and the mix of sweat and wet was the cause of illness. Thus, the Crown authorized a tax in 1560 of 1 tomin (or 1/8 of a peso) per ton of unloaded merchandise to collect enough funds for the pier.24 However, later the same year, the Cabildo reported that they had collected only 3,350 pesos and that they needed 15,000 pesos, 20 enslaved Africans, and 2 or 3 small ships to bring the stones for the construction of the pier behind the Casa de Contratación.25 In 1568, the Cabildo wrote again to the Crown asking for the pier, and finally, a testimony of a Captain Ponalmonte in 1573 explained how unviable was the location of the Cabildo’s proposed pier. Apparently, the sands were unstable. The only place where

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24 AGI Signatura\AGI\Panama 236 L9\1\609. El oficio sobre lo del muelle. 1560
25 AGI Patronato 193 R41\1\1. 1560.
it was viable to build a platform was next to Antonio Cuarel de la Concha, a half league from the city, where there was backwater and the pier could be easily built with low cost. However, in his opinion that location was inconvenient because of the long distance between the pier and the city, connected by sandy road, with a swamp in the middle that was impossible to cross in the rainy season.26

The construction of public buildings was apparently as controversial as the construction of the fortress and the pier. For example, John Thrower proposed the existence of a Treasure house, Casa de Contratación, Cabildo, Governor’s house or Contaduria, and a church, among others. However, the archival documents do not mention the existence of many public buildings, and it seems that the existing ones served more than one function.

There are few references in colonial documents regarding government buildings. In 1548, when the Cabildo reported the availability of construction materials, they asked the Crown to order the construction of a Casa de Contratación y fundicion [royal smeltery] with stone.27 There is no reference to the construction of the building; however, that same year the Crown forbade the construction of houses on the beach in front of the Casa de Contratación.28 The date of the construction of the stone building is unknown because in 1552, the Cabildo reported that one of the houses belonging to the Crown where the officials lived and work was falling apart.29 This could have been the Casa de Contratación or any other building. This reference to various “casas” leads me to believe that there was more than one building used for official activities.

26 AGI Panama 236 L10\1\260. 1568. AGI Patronato 193 R4\1\18. 1574.
27 AGI Panama 32 N4\1\1. 1548.
28 AGI Panama 235L8\1\365. 1548
29 AGI Panama 29 R5 N14\1\1. 1552.
There are no more references to government buildings until 1572 when corsair Francis Drake attacked the town. Drake’s narrative offers one of the most detailed surviving descriptions of government buildings in the town,

“...[Captain Drake] went with the rest to view the town and especially a mount...He then commanded his brother and John Oxenham with sixteen men to go above the King’s treasure-house, and enter near the east end of the market-place, himself with the rest designing to march up the broad street... to the market-place...and some towns men got together in arms at the market-place, by the governor’s house, near the gate of the town...they hung lines with matches lighted across the end of the market-place...who all fled when they perceived themselves discovered...Being returned, they made a stand in the midst of the market-place, Drake sending some from thence to stop the alarm bell, which continued ringing all this while; but the church being stone built, and firmly locked and bolted, they could not get in without firing it, which the captain forbid...mean time some Spaniards...were commanded to direct them to the governor’s house, where usually all the mules that brought the king’s treasure from Panama were unladen, though silver only was kept there, the gold, pearl and jewels when entered by the King’s officer, being carried from thence to the treasury hard by, which was very strong, built of lime and stone for securing it; coming to the governor’s house, they found the door where the mules unload just opened, a candle lighted on the stair, and a very fine Spanish horse ready saddle...” (Wright 1932: 10-12)

Drake’s description is rich in details about locations and the type of construction of government buildings. The description of the attack suggests that
they entered the town from the east. The mount referred to by Drake is El Morro, which was located to the northeast of the town. Then, the group split in two, one entered the town from the east end of the plaza where the Treasure house was, while the other used a broad street. The broad street seems to be a street referred to in other documents connecting the beach with the plaza. Because of its north-south direction, it is probably the *Calle de la Carrera* mentioned in 1583, or one parallel to it.\(^{30}\) Furthermore, since 1528, a street parallel to the beach is called *Calle Real*,\(^ {31} \) and in 1589, the *Cabildo* mentions the existence of four main streets in the town.\(^ {32} \) Thus, the English would arrive from the two northern corners of the plaza while the Spanish group was in the south end of the plaza where the *Camino Real* entered the town and where the gate to Panama would be located (Figure 4.5). According to Drake’s description of the Treasure house and the *Casa de Contratacion* from the *Cabildo*,\(^ {33} \) these seem to be the same building since it is located on the northeast end of the plaza. Furthermore, based on all the documents analyzed, there is no evidence of the existence of a separate *Tesoreria* building, or Treasure House.

The location of the Governor’s house is somewhat confusing since Drake’s description only suggests its proximity to the plaza and the Panama Gate. Thus, it could be located east or south of the square. However, the location of the church perhaps can clarify this. Drake describes standing in the middle of the square and sending people to the church and the Governor’s house. Thus, it is possible he could see both buildings from this point.

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\(^{30}\) AGI Contratacion 928 N15\|\|l. 1584. \\
\(^{31}\) AGI Panama 235 L6\|\|l\|1. 1528. \\
\(^{32}\) AGI Contratacion 237 N1 R16\|\|l\|1. 1589. \\
\(^{33}\) AGI Patronato 193 R4\|\|l. 1560 and ANP Tomo 1 Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Panama, 1573-1609. Estante 109, cajon 1, legajo 1. 1574
Colonial documents make several references to the existence of a church in the town. The first reference dates to 1544 when the *Cabildo* wrote that it was built with donations but there were no tithes to maintain the clergy. In 1555, 1557, 1561, and 1562, the *Cabildo* reported that the building, or part of it, fell down because they could not afford to build it stronger and better. Although the construction of a stronger and bigger church is reported in 1562, by 1563 only the main nave had been built, and it was made of wood with a thatched roof. The governor wrote that seven thousand pesos were necessary to finish the main body of the church, otherwise it would fall down.

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34 AGI Panama 32 N2\1\1. 1544
35 AGI Panama 32 N8\1\1. 1555. ANP Cartas y expedientes de los cabildos de Nombre de Dios Portobelo y Veragua. Estante 69 cajon 2 legajo 1. 1557 Petición que hace el Concejo de Nombre de Dios pidiendo mercedes al Rey para el sostenimiento de la población. AGI Patronato 193 R38\1\1. 1561. ANP Tomo III Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Panama, 1530-1579. Est. 69 Caj 2 Leg 39. 1562.
36 ANP Tomo III Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Panama, 1530-1579. Est. 69 Caj 2 Leg 39. 1562. AGI Panama 32 N12\1\1. 1563
would fall before a year because it was an open structure with straw roof maintained by donations from the population.\textsuperscript{37} Apparently, sometime between 1563 and Drake’s attack in 1572, the church was built of stone. In 1575, Alonso de Criado de Castilla, described “...the church is a good temple and very strong...”\textsuperscript{38} After this date, the only reference to the church is from the Cabildo asking permission to buy ornaments and chalices using unclaimed inheritances.\textsuperscript{39} Even though there are no significant Spanish descriptions of the building per se, in 1541 Hernando de Sala, inhabitant of Nombre de Dios, makes a complaint because the bishop ordered the bell tower knocked down and rebuilt between the main nave and his house. Sala complains that the tower occupied almost all the Calle Real.\textsuperscript{40} This detail seems insignificant until it is related to Drake Manuscript map. On the east side of the plaza, there is a building that differs in size with other buildings and next to it, on its north east end, there is a taller and thinner building, perhaps the bell tower mentioned by Sala and Drake. Thus, if the church was to the east of the square, the only location left close to the Panama Gate for the Governor’s house is south of the plaza. Furthermore, the location of the Panama Gate is limited to the southeast corner of the plaza since the Camino Real entered the town that way. Now, the question to ask is what did Drake call the Panama Gate. There is no reference in Spanish documents from Nombre de Dios to any gates in the town. However, it was previously mentioned that Mena García found that Sancho Clavijo, Governor of Panama in the

\textsuperscript{37} ANP Audiencia de Panamá, Cartas y expedientes del Gobernador de tierra firme, Años 1550 a 1699, Estante 69 Cajón 2 Legajo 39. 1562. Carta de Don Luis Guzman Gobernador de tierra firme de la residencia de D. R. Figuerola, de los Regidores de Panamá y Nombre de Dios, de la edificación de la Iglesia y fortaleza y otras cosas de gobierno.

\textsuperscript{38} Nombre de Dios, May 7 1575. Sumaria descripción del reino de Tierra Firme, llamado Castilla del Oro, que está sujeto a la real audiencia de la ciudad de Panamá, por el Alonso Criado de Castilla, oidor decano de la misma. In Jopling 1994:11

\textsuperscript{39} AGI Signatura\AGI\Panama 237 L11\1\55. 1578.

\textsuperscript{40} AGI Panama 235 L7\1\424. 1541.
1550s, ordered the construction of a bastion in Nombre de Dios (Mena García 1992). Perhaps, some type of palisade was later built to defend the town from maroons coming from the Camino Real. Palisades are not very common features in Spanish cities. However, the existence of a protective palisade has been suggested in Panama City surrounding the complex of government buildings developed in the sixteenth century.

The crucial role of the town in the trade system created the need for constructions conducive for the administration of the town and commercial activities as well. Curiously, the presence of buildings used as lonjas [exchange houses] is not mentioned until the end of the century. However, they were probably in existence many decades before the abandonment of the town because in 1558, there was an individual Gaspar Hernandez with the position of corredor de lonja [manager of the market]. In addition, in 1596 the Cabildo reported that merchants were writing contracts without the correduria de lonja. However, in 1597, the Cabildo wrote to the Crown asking for the construction of a lonja to unload and protect the merchandise from weather and thieves as opposed to employing barracks built by merchants. The construction of lonjas is one more example of the contradictions found in the documentary evidence. Even though in 1597 the Cabildo asked for the construction of a lonja, that same year the Audiencia de Panama, while contesting the possibility of moving the port from Nombre de Dios to Honduras, described the existence of many lonjas and houses in the port.

The last public building mentioned in colonial documents is the hospital. In 1535, the Cabildo requested the construction of a hospital to house the poor people

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41 AGI Panama 32 N22\1\18. Informacion sobre la ciudad del Nombre de Dios. Mayo 30 1596
42 Panama 32N2\1\6. 1597.
and sick travelers.\textsuperscript{43} The same year the Crown authorized its construction and purchase of beds, but it did not occur because the \textit{Cabildo} wrote again for funds in 1544.\textsuperscript{44} We know that by 1561, there was a building designated for the hospital because the \textit{Cabildo} complained that it was falling down.\textsuperscript{45} Although the Crown again received reports of the need for beds and medicines in 1567,\textsuperscript{46} conditions did not improve, and in 1575 the reports were still negative "...it has a hospital, although not well supplied as it should be for all the ill people that are taken in, it has small rent, that it is served from the donations of the residents..." .\textsuperscript{47} The only other information available about the hospital is that in 1561 the \textit{Cabildo} requested clergy to reside at the hospital to provide last rites, and to bury poor people in the hospital yard.\textsuperscript{48}

Although not necessarily public, other exceptional buildings in a Spanish city were the monasteries. Since the first decades of Nombre de Dios, different religious orders attempted to establish themselves in the port. The first allusion to a monastic building is in 1536 when the Crown granted 200 pesos for the San Francisco Monastery.\textsuperscript{49} Apparently, this monastery was never built because it is not mentioned in any other document. After this date, Santo Domingo is the only monastery referred in the archives.\textsuperscript{50} Díaz López suggests that the monastery closed in 1565 because the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{43} AGI Patronato 277 N4 R172\l 1\l 1. 1535.  \\
\textsuperscript{44} AGI Panama 234 L5\l 1\l 476. 1535. AGI Panama 32 N2\l 1\l 1. 1544.  \\
\textsuperscript{45} AGI Patronato 193 R38\l 1\l 1.  \\
\textsuperscript{46} AGI Panama 236 L10\l 1\l 188 "El embaxador de Roma sobre el jubileo para las ciudades de Panama y Nombre de Dios  \\
\textsuperscript{47} Nombre de Dios, May 7 1575. Sumaria descripción del reino de Tierra Firme, llamado Castilla del Oro, que está sujeto a la real audiencia de la ciudad de Panamá, por el Alonso Criado de Castilla, oidor decano de la misma. In Jopling 1994:11. "...tiene un hospital, aunque no tan proveido como convenía para los muchos enfermos que en él se recogen; tiene poca renta, que de limosna de los vecinos se remedia..."  \\
\textsuperscript{48} AGI Panama 236L10\l 1\l 188. 1561.  \\
\textsuperscript{49} AGI Panama 235 L6\l 1\l 64. El monasterio de Nombre de Dios  \\
\textsuperscript{50} AGI Signatura Panama 236 L9\l 1\l 101. 1541. Hernando de la sal sobre cierto edificio.
\end{flushright}
Dominicans could not maintain it and they moved to Panama City (Díaz López 2001). This date seems accurate since the Santo Domingo Monastery in Panama City was built around 1575. However, there are two documents from later times mentioning the monastery. In 1569, Diego Sanchez is mentioned to have a garden in the monastery, and in 1575 the Cabildo wrote that there was a poor monastery attended by one or two Dominican friars. This seems reasonable since unlike monastic complexes in Europe, many in Spanish America housed only a few friars.

The absence of public buildings such as a cabildo, jail, and contaduría, further suggests multiple functions of the existing buildings. The only two stone buildings described are the church and Casa de Contratación, while the Governor’s house is never mentioned as being built of the same materials. According to documentary information, the Casa de Contratación was used for appraisal and storage of merchandise, while the Governor’s house also stored the King’s treasures and housed the mules used in transportation of merchandise. In addition, the Cabildo probably met in one of these two buildings.

**Households and pulperías**

Another important feature of urban geography is private property. The first allusion to private lots dates to 1528, when Diego de Espinosa, escribano [royal scribe], and Joan de Salinas received plots located between the Calle Real and the

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51 Cartas privadas, Enrique Otte 1995. Carta 309, p272
52 Nombre de Dios, May 7 1575. Sumaria descripción del reino de Tierra Firme, llamado Castilla del Oro, que está sujeto a la real audiencia de la ciudad de Panamá, por el Alonso Criado de Castilla, oidor decano de la misma. In Jopling 1994:11. “...hay un pobre monasterio y frailes dominicos do asisten uno o dos religiosos...”
beach to build houses within two years. The land granted to these Spaniards was previously reserved for the contratación to unload merchandise. The reference to previous functions of the land suggests that there was an initial urban plan (Figure 4.6). However, for unknown reasons the Cabildo started distributing these plots.

These plots were still assigned this way in 1536 when another plot in the same location was given to Gonzalo Martel de la Puente, treasurer. These lots were perhaps given as pay for their service to the Cabildo since two of them had government positions. However, Diego de Espinosa never built and in 1536 he sold his lot to Luis Sanchez Dalvo, teniente factor.

![Figure 4.6: Hypothetical urban grid of Nombre de Dios based on documents from the first half of the century.](image)

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53 AGI Panama 235 L6\1\111. 1528. Luis Sanchez confirmacion de un solar
54 AGI Panama 235 L6 \1\34. 1536. El tesorero Gonzalo Martel Merced a un solar
55 AGI Panama 235 L6\1\111. 1536. Luys Sanchez Salvo confirmacion de un solar.
In 1536, the *Cabildo* began to auction plots of land on the main plaza to encourage more residents to stay in Nombre de Dios. Houses were built on the plot, and renters had to sign a two-year lease to assure the growth of the town’s population. The *Cabildo* reported they could only rent the plots for 500 pesos because nobody could offer more. The *Cabildo* described the construction and cost of the houses as follows:

"...and it cost to build a house, a round bohio [hut], three hundred gold pesos...that cost to build three kitchenettes for the said house sixty gold pesos... it cost to put a sky [roof] in the said houses and a well and stores and doors and latches, and other things fifty three pesos and seven tomins... it cost to fence with canes for the inside and the barns and to make the rooms for three house-stores that such house has fourteen gold pesos..." 56

After this, there are only three more references to household construction. In 1536, Francisco Barrio Nuevo owned two houses, and in 1541 Alonso Caballero asked for permission to build one house. Finally, in 1548, the Crown denied a petition to build houses on the beach in front of the *Casa de Contratacion*, and ordered any house already built in that part to be knocked down, as well as to stop the fleets from building huts or stalls on the beach to avoid frauds to the *Real Hacienda* 57. The stalls

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56 Justicia 365/Residencia. Segundo legajo de la nominada residencia tomada a Franisco Barrionuevo, gobernador de Panamá a sus tenientes oficiales y demás ministros de justicia (ff 1057-1060). In Jopling 1994: 227. 1536. "Y que les costo hacer la casa un bohio redondo trescientos pesos de oro ...que costaron hacer tres cocinetas para la dicha casa sesenta pesos de oro...costó echar cielo en las dichas casas y hacer un pozo y tiendas y puertas y aldabas y otros reparos cincuenta y tres pesos y siete tomines... costó cercarla de cañas para de dentro y los corrales y hacer los apartados para tres casa tiendas que tiene la dicha casa catorce pesos de oro.... Por manera que les costaron hacer las dichas casas según por la dicha venta parece cuatrocientos y veinte y siete pesos y siete tomines de buen oro..."

57 AGI Panama 235L8/1/365) June 16, 1548
on the beach could easily sell goods before their appraisal by the treasurer, thus they would not pay importation and sales taxes to the Crown.

There are few other references regarding the houses in the town. Some of the best descriptions are produced after fires. Five fires were reported in the colonial documents mainly to ask for tax relief on merchandise or construction materials. The first fire was in 1536 and was apparently a small fire because the merchants were only asking to have money back from the taxes paid on the merchandise that burned. Two years later, another fire occurred, but this time it affected most of the houses. "...from more than hundred and fifty houses that were there very good ones in the style of this the land only one small house from Your Magesty was left where the merchandise is unloaded and another one that was fenced next to it where all the people are now gathered...".

In January 1541, another fire destroyed the church, hospital, and some houses and once again, the Cabildo asked for tax relief, this time on construction materials. There are no fires reported for several decades and the size of the town appears to have stabilized because in 1575, Alonso Criado de Castillo described the town as having two hundred houses. The next fire reported was in January 1596 and was initiated by Drake, on his last voyage. Alonso de Sotomayor noted that many bohíos were made of straw and during the fire half of the town burned. Apparently,

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58 AGI Panama 235 L7\1\67. 1536. Los mercaderes de Sevilla
59 AGI Patronato 194 R43\1\1. Dia de San Santiago or July 25 1538. "...de mas de de ciento y cinquenta casas que abia alla muy bienas conforme a la tierra no quedo en toda ella mas de una pequena casa de Vuestra Magestad donde se descarga las mercancias y otra que estaba enpalizada a par de ella que quedaron por dicha donde agora esta retrayda toda la gente..." The lost is of merchandise is calculated in two hundred thousand pesos ()
60 AGI Panama 32 N1. 1541.
61 Nombre de Dios, May 7 1575. In Jopling 1994:11. Sumaria descripción del reino de Tierra Firme, llamado Castilla del Oro, que está sujeto a la real audiencia de la ciudad de Panamá, por el Alonso Criado de Castilla, oidor decano de la misma.
62 AGI Panama 32 N22\1\41 Consideraciones de Don Alonso de Sotomayor Vuestro Presidente de la Real Audiencia de Panama para el traslado de Nombre de Dios a San Felipe de Puertobelo
Nombre de Dios was rapidly rebuilt because the same year in August, another fire consumed most of the town.

The description of the fire in August 1596 is the only detailed account of the houses existing in the town. It mentions forty-four casas and bohios that were affected by the fire and how people moved as much merchandise as they could from the houses to the plaza and the beach. Of the forty-four houses, three were rented to merchants and officials, and other three had pulperías [stores]. House rental in trading port contexts like Nombre de Dios was common. As mentioned before, the Cabildo itself rented houses. Other types of houses identified that were not rented as a whole but per room were called posadas [literally, “inns”]. In 1573, Gabriel de las Casas identified himself as a ventero or owner of a posada. De las Casas claimed after Hernando de Biteri died that he rented a sala [room] to Biteri and he provided a detailed cost of living in his posada: “... for a room that I rented to him [Hernando Biteri] to keep his clothes and the eighteen pesos for thirty one days that I fed him six pesos each day and seven pesos that I gave for his doctor that look at him and the rest that I gave him of money and I spent in his illness...”. Thus, posadas were not only a place to stay but also to recover one’s health.

Other profitable businesses in town were the pulperías. These were the largest group of permanent stores. They offered products to people with limited economic means through credit. Credit was the means to move merchandise in the colonies. The merchants received products from Spain thanks to credit offered by European merchants. This credit was extended to large and small wholesalers and to

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63 British Library, Add MS 13977, f 163-167. Relacion del Temerario y Lastimoso Yncendio qe ubo en la ciudad del Nombre de Dios de Reyno de Tierra Firme, Martes trece de agosto de Nobenta y seis anos.
64 AGI Contratacion 210 N1 R1\1\1. 1574. “...por una sala que le aquile para tener su ropa y los diez y ocho pesos por treinta y un dias que le di de comer a seis pesos cada un dia y siete pesos que di por el al doctor que le mirava y lo demas que le di de plata y gaste en su enfermedad...”
small stores (Kinsbruner 2005). The inventory of some possessions from Juana María Destrada who died in 1583 and owned a pulperia provides a better idea of the products that were sold.65 If Destrada’s possessions are compared with Andrea de Guzman’s possessions,66 another woman living in Nombre de Dios, it is possible to see some differences when it comes to the private belongings that are probably the reflection of different social status (Table 4.1). Some of the objects described in the inventory were found in the archaeological survey, suggesting that the products sold in pulperias were probably for local consumption. Furthermore, the social difference between the two women is reflected in the type of personal possessions. Destrada’s possessions were limited to basic needs and objects related to commercial activities, while Guzman’s possessions show more personal ornament and religious paraphernalia.

Although the pulperias were permanent establishments, they were not the only places to acquire merchandise. The marketplace during the trade fairs was located in the plaza, but not all the products reached this location. In many years the fleets built huts and stalls on the beach where they were supposed to keep all the merchandise until the treasurer did the inventory. However, they used these huts to introduce illegal products. The Crown was aware that the masters of merchant ships used these stalls to store clothing, but because the stalls were out of sight of the authorities, other illegal merchandise, such as swords and arms,67 was stored and sold there.

65 AGI Contratacion 928 N15\1\1. 1584. See original and complete inventories in Appendix 1, Document 1.
66 AGI Contratacion 474B N4 R113\1. 1577. See original inventory in Appendix 1, Document 2
67 AGI Panama 235L8\1\365. June 16, 1548
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Juan Maria Destrada inventory</th>
<th>Andrea de Guzman inventory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two frayed mattresses</td>
<td>One chest with the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four frayed pillows with wool</td>
<td>One linen blanket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One pair of frayed woman's clogs</td>
<td>One old red front [apron]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A table</td>
<td>Four sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bed of linen</td>
<td>Other two sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An old weight and a balance</td>
<td>One old shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A small chair</td>
<td>Other old shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two spoons and a silver fork</td>
<td>Other old sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A trunk with keys</td>
<td>Two pillows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six frayed shirts and two pairs of linen petticoats</td>
<td>One hemp petticoat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five hands of paper</td>
<td>One hemp cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One hank of white silk</td>
<td>One skirt with velvet ornaments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A set of table cloths and four napkins</td>
<td>Three pairs of buckles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One fan</td>
<td>Other pillow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two penknives</td>
<td>An old table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenty nine hackneyed playing cards</td>
<td>Two old chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One copper caldron</td>
<td>One big table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One hank of homemade thread</td>
<td>Some wool and one bed sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One ounce of saffron</td>
<td>Twenty-eight gold beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A paper with bale of needles</td>
<td>A headdress of small silver buttons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One paper with jet necklaces</td>
<td>One bag of silk and gold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A paper with thimbles</td>
<td>One crucifix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A paper with glass earrings</td>
<td>One baby Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleven varas of plain blue silk ribbon</td>
<td>Pricked gloves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bag with some pepper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three string of glass beads</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six pieces of white ribbon of white thread</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four candlesticks two new and two used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four pair of scissors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourteen pairs of sandals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two pairs of shoes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two small bottijas of lard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A paper with few thin needles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three brooms for sweeping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A hat and a cleaning brush</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three dozens of thick white plates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>340 small clay earrings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two child hammocks one new one old</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three wide-bellied botija [olive jars] with salt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three varas of linen from Rouen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A large tinaja of frayed water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One fruit bowl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four large clay casserole and two small ones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirty-three plates and porcelains from Pisa wares</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two white cotton blankets one new and one frayed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two small botijas [olive jars] of honey from Nicaragua</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Comparison of inventories from two deceased women in Nombre de Dios.
Even though the description of houses, *pulperias*, and *bohios* is detailed in the 1596 account of the fire, there are other descriptions of the town from the end of the century that are contradictory. For example, Jean Baptista Antonelli described Nombre de Dios as a city of hardly 30 houses when the Crown was deciding if it was appropriate to move the town.\(^{68}\) However, Antonelli himself in a later document contradicts his description when the Crown already approved the move of the port. Antonelli described the existence of around 60 houses, timber buildings with tiled roofs, a church, a *Casa de Contratación*, and merchant houses. Another example of contradictory descriptions is found in an interrogation about the condition of the port. In 1596, the *Audiencia de Panama* called witnesses to corroborate if it was true that in Nombre de Dios there were no inhabitants in the town and there were only twelve houses that were rented for people with duties related to the fleets and government. The results of the interrogation are interesting. One witness said he knew there were many houses in the town and a *correduría de lonja* [exchange house], while others said that there were no houses or that the houses and the town were in poor condition.\(^{69}\) These contradictions in the descriptions of the town at the end of the century is due to the different interests of the *Audiencia de Panama* and other Spaniards who were looking to keep the port-of-call in Panama but relocate it to Portobelo. Thus, the descriptions needed to be negative to support the relocation of the port.

In any case, the accounts of the town suggest that the size of the port changed over time. It was slowly increasing during the first decades after and by the 1550s, it reached a size that did not change for several decades. However, by the end of the

\(^{68}\) AGI Panama 1 N67\d1\l1. 1587.
\(^{69}\) AGI Panama 32 N22\d1\l10. Informe de la ciudad del Nombre de Dios May 30 1596
century, it apparently reduced its size to half of what was claimed in 1575, that is, from one or two hundred houses it was reduced to fifty or sixty houses. The reduction of the town was perhaps due to the unsafety of the port and the rumors of its future abandonment.

4.2 Townspeople and life in town

Spanish colonies not only varied in geographic location and functions, but also in the composition of their populations. The different activities practiced in a city, and its potential to acquire wealth, were some of the main reasons for migrations. The New World appeared to many as the promised land where there were means to acquire wealth and climb the social ladder. But this promised land was not open to everyone. The granting of licenses to travel to the New World was a control mechanism used by the Crown to monitor the type and quantity of immigrants arriving in the colonies. These licenses created large registries containing invaluable information. Even though granting a license did not mean the individuals actually traveled, surviving records give an idea of the type of travelers going to the New World and their destination. Thanks to these registries and other archival documents, it was possible to create a database of the population of Nombre de Dios in the sixteenth century. The resulting sample is of 853 individuals who traveled to and/or lived in the town at some point in the sixteenth century (Table 4.2). From all the individuals identified as arriving in Nombre de Dios at some point, 87% (761) were European immigrants.

The number of immigrants arriving in Nombre de Dios fluctuated during the life of the town (Figure 4.7). Even though arrival did not mean the individuals
established their residence in the settlement, the record gives a good idea of the numbers of people moving through the port. Of the 761 European immigrants, only 189 licenses are in the registry in the Archivo General de Indias. However, this should not be interpreted as illegal migration of the remaining individuals since many documents were lost over the centuries, but it is true that not all the immigrants entered the colonies legally. The acquisition of a license to travel was a slow bureaucratic process. Pérez-Mallaina suggests that this process included bribes to notaries and functionaries to speed up the procedures, in addition to complying with regulations and having enough means to finance the cost of passage and food for the trip. In cases where the license was not granted, the traveler attempted to enter clandestinely (Lugar 1986). Becoming a sailor was one of the easy ways to enter the
colonies without a license (Pérez-Mallaina 1998). However, enlisting as a sailor did not mean the individual was capable of doing the job; such complaints are constant from the fleet and government officials. For example, in 1568, a Dr. Aguirre complained that not all the passengers in the fleets were registered and many of the sailors and cabin boys did not know their duties and were only doing that job to get to America. Moreover, illegal immigrants were not limited to sailors and merchants. In 1535, the Cabildo of Nombre de Dios filed a complaint because even clergymen were coming to the port without a license. Still in 1602, there are reports of passengers without a license trying to go to Peru from Panama. To solve the problem, the Crown ordered port officials to stop illegal immigrants in Portobelo and return them in the next fleet to Spain.

Europeans from other regions besides Spain were part of the illegal immigration into the American colonies. Some stayed in the isthmus, especially in Nombre de Dios, Panama, and Veragua, and later moved to Peru. Most were Portuguese. Still, only one resident of Nombre de Dios has been clearly identified in the documents as a ‘foreigner’. Between 1550 and 1551, Andres Corzo underwent an examination of his residency in Nombre de Dios because he was from Corsica, and had been living in the port for over 20 years. Corzo claimed to be 70 years old and own houses, ships, and mule trains in town. In 1561, the Crown ordered all

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70 ANP Simancas Secular, Audiencia de Panamá, Cartas y expedientes del Presidente y Oidores de dicha Audiencia vistos en el Consejo. Años 1541 a 1584. Est 69. Caj 2 Leg.24. Carta del Dr. Aguirre Oidor de la Audiencia de Panamá da cuenta de las faltas que se cometian por las flotas que iban de España y refiere la mala vida y costumbres de Dr. Francisco Diaz Chantre de aduella Iglesia. Panma 10 Febrero 1568
71 AGI Panama 234 L5\1\482
72 ANP Tomo 1 Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Panamá, 1573-1609. Est. 109 Caj 1 Leg 1. 1602
73 AGI Panama 39 N20 F94r-106r. December 25 1550. Interrogatorio relacionado con Andres Corzo quien reside en Nombre de Dios y es de Corcega. AGI Signatura\AGI\Panama 236 L9\1\19. 1551.
foreigners living in the colonies to be expelled unless they were married to Spanish women and had lived in the colonies for more than 10 years. However, there is no record of any foreigners leaving the town during this period. Apparently, this regulation did not diminish the number of foreigners entering Panama because in 1596, a Licenciado Salazar, an audiencia judge, wrote about the large quantity of foreigners arriving in Tierra Firme [or Castilla del Oro] posing as sailors. Salazar argued that the foreigners posed a threat when they were in ports such as Nombre de Dios because they could inform corsairs about the land and treasures, and show them the port entrances and exits. Salazar also suggested that foreigners were so well-established in the town that even the alguacil mayor [chief constable] of Nombre de Dios was Portuguese (Mena Garcia 1984).

The approval of a license did not assure the destination of individuals. In many cases, the license was released for a specific place, but the individual continued traveling to other colonies. It was difficult for the Spanish crown to control the final destination of travelers once they arrived in America. Nombre de Dios was one of the entrance ports to the South American market but was not a place most immigrants wished to settle in permanently. This condition attracted people from Spain and from other parts of the Old and New World but only temporarily. Thus, the number of people referenced in documents does not clearly indicate residency, but rather transit.

During the collection of information about the individuals, it was possible to identify persons that possibly established their residence in the town by analyzing the records where they were mentioned, and the years of the documents. Thus, it is possible to suggest that at least 127 individuals lived in the town at some point for more than a year (Table 4.3 and Figure 4.8). The individuals that were only

74 AGI Signatura\AGI\Panama 236 L9\1\618. Al governador de Tierra Firme. 156
Table 4.3: Descriptive table of individuals living in Nombre de Dios based on the years they were mentioned in documents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years spent in town</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One year</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 years</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 years</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+ more years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.8: Europeans traveling and living in Nombre de Dios based on archival documents.

mentioned one time in archival documents and were not identified as residents in the town, or there is no more information regarding their status, could just be in transition to another colony even if their license said something different.

Even though 127 individuals were identified to have lived more than two years in the town, Nombre de Dios had at least 238 declared vecinos during the sixteenth century (Table 4.4). Susan Socolow considers individuals that lived in a town for more than four years and who qualified for government positions to be vecinos (Socolow 1986). Socolow’s other residential category is habitantes, or residents of a town with limited political power and limited legal status as city dwellers. However, the term habitantes is completely absent from the archival documents analyzed for Nombre de
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of residency</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nombre de Dios vecino</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>28.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nombre de Dios vecino?</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>9.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nombre de Dios estante</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>6.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nombre de Dios residente</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nombre de Dios/Veragua</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nombre de Dios/Panama</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sevilla</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other colonies</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>848</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Residency of individuals in the sample (The interrogation mark is used when the type of residency is not certain)

Dios. The terms used in the documents, besides *vecino*, are *estantes* and *residentes*. *Estantes* were individuals that had licenses to reside in a town for a limited amount of time, usually between 4 and 5 years. From the short-term permanent residents of Nombre de Dios, that is, those individuals identified as *residentes* or *estantes*, the highest percentage are *estantes*. This is easily explained by the nature of the city. Since Nombre de Dios was the recipient port for the merchandise from Spain and Peru, the merchant houses needed representatives in the town who were called *Factores*. Merchant houses typically sent *factores* abroad for 4 to 5 years; however, licenses could be extended, and in some cases individuals stayed in the same place without them since it was difficult for the Crown to keep track of valid licenses. In the records studied, only 6 individuals (11%) that claimed to be *estantes* were found to live in the town more than a year. And only for one of them, merchant Francisco de Herrera, is there a record of an extension of a license to live in Nombre de Dios. Herrera apparently lived a remarkable 26 years in the port.
For the individuals declaring themselves *residentes*, the percentage living in the town more than a year is larger. From the 22 individuals claiming to be residents, 7 (31%) lived between five and thirty years in Nombre de Dios. At this time, it appears that *residente* and *estante* were nearly synonymous terms since in both cases, the occupations as well as the length of time spent in the town, varied. Further studies of residents of Nombre de Dios and their occupations could clarify if there is a difference between *residente* and *estante*.

María del Carmen Mena García has suggested that a floating population of merchants who usually lived in Panama City were also the inhabitants of Nombre de Dios but only during the trade fairs. For example, in 1592, Diego Suarez de Anaya reported that there were 200 vecinos in Nombre de Dios during the trade fairs but only 15 to 20 stayed after the fleet left (Mena Garcia 1992). Only sixteen individuals were officially declared to have double residency with Panama or Veragua. However, it is likely that this group was larger than it appears or that residents of Nombre de Dios did not officially take residency in other colonies, but spent long periods of time outside of the town. There is no way to know with certainty where most spent the bulk of their time.

Although the double residency and the long absences from town are practically impossible to determine from the documentary record, it is possible to analyze the demography of the town in a preliminary way by analyzing the individuals who declared any type of residency in Nombre de Dios (Figure 4.9). According to the records, there were constant fluctuations in the town’s population. There are three periods when the population increased and three other periods with sudden decreases. At least one of the reductions in the number of residents is reported in two documents from the 1560s. In 1561, the *Cabildo* informed the Crown...
that the population of the town had declined because of maroon attacks and poverty.\textsuperscript{75} The second report is the result of a change in the elections of \textit{regidores} [aldermen]. In 1562, the \textit{Cabildo} replied to the Crown that there might not be enough people left in town after the fleet’s departure to choose eight candidates for \textit{regidores}.\textsuperscript{76} The other two population decreases might be explained by circumstances related to marronage and piracy. Curiously, in 1552 it has been claimed that the population of Castilla del Oro was affected by an epidemic and at least 20 to 25 vecinos from Nombre de Dios died (Mena Garcia 1984). Apparently, this loss of vecinos did not affect the increasing population of the town, but this was a time of growing migration to Peru following the discovery of the Potosí silver mines. The demographic chart

\textsuperscript{75} AGI Panama 30 N9\textbackslash{}16, 1561.
\textsuperscript{76} ANP Tomo III Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Panama, 1530-1579. Est. 69 Caj 2 Leg 39. 1562.
found in Figure 4.9 demonstrates that when the height of the town’s commercial development occurred (1560s-1580s), the European population of the port also reached its highest number.

Illness was one of the reasons frequently cited for the small population of Nombre de Dios. From all the individuals registered to travel to or live in Nombre de Dios during the sixteenth century, 118 deaths were registered in the town (this is without notary records). Even though it is a small sample, a demographic chart of the deaths gives an idea of periods when the death rate was higher (Figure 4.10). Although the epidemic suggested by Mena Garcia in 1552 is not represented, there were periods when deaths increased. Two of them coincided with periods when the population was high in town (around 1554 and 1571) and the other two peaks with periods when the population declined (around 1567 and 1586).

Besides epidemics, travelers and residents of the town blamed the malodorous environment, the absence of a pier, forcing people to walk in water and mud, and the consumption of fruits as the cause of all illnesses. For example, in 1576 Pedro Valero wrote to his mother in Spain: “...they will bring them to Nombre de Dios, where, if somebody comes by misfortune, avoid the women and going around town at night or at noon, because the high temperatures and the rain storms, that if they do not stay away the ones that come from Spain will die...”77 Another alleged cause of illness was the lack of a pier. In 1560, the Cabildo wrote “…the principal cause of deaths and illnesses that are there it is understood to be that the sailors load and unload the ships and are in the water to their arms with a lot of sweat and work and the land is

77 Potosí 1.XII.1576 in Carta 590, Enrique Otte 1993: 525 “...si acaso alguno de mis hermanos aportase en Sevilla, para venir a estas partes, él los enviará, y por ventura los traerá hasta Nombre de Dios, adonde, si acaso alguno vinieres por desgracia, se guarde de mujeres y de andar por el pueblo de noche o a medio día, por las calores grandes que hacen, y aguaceros, que si de esto no se guarda el que viene de España morirá, como hacen todos lo que son desarrelados. Y guardándose de esto, tendrá con ayuda de Dios salud...”
hot and poorly taken care of they end their lives...”  

Finally, in 1587, a traveler, Celedon Favalis, described this scene:

“...we went on board to Nombre de Dios, where we arrived in the day of Our Lady in August. And then the same day at two in the afternoon we arrived to land and we were there more than a month, and it is true, that even we were coming with great fear, because it is there where an infinite number of people die, that nowhere I found myself better than there, thanks to God. But I ate few fruits, that it is what usually does most harm ...”

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78 AGI Patronato 193 R41\11. 1560, “…la principal causa de las muertes y enfermedades que ay en ella se tiene entendido ser que como los marineros cargan e descargan los navios e andan en el agua hasta los brazos con mucho sudor e trabajo y la tierra es caliente y ellos mal mantenidos acaban las vidas…”

79 Los Reyes 20.III.1587 in Carta 487, Enrique Otte 1993: 431 “...que embarcamos para Nombre de Dios, donde llegamos día de Nuestra Señora de agosto. Y luego aquel mismo día a las dos de la tarde salimos a tierra y estuvimos allí más de un mes, y cierto que, aunque veníamos con gran miedo, por
Even though the conditions in Nombre de Dios were far from ideal, European immigrants continued arriving at the port during the sixteenth century.

**Family Ties and Migration**

Many arrivals in America resulted from personal relationships, which dramatized the importance of family ties in the Spanish colonies. The settlers asked their family members to join them for different reasons. Merchants felt a sense of security when their business relations included blood relatives, and older men sent for younger members of the family for help. For example, priest Juan Lazaro Navarro wrote in 1569 to his brother Domingo Lazaro: “...That your Great Mercy receives this [ménage] try to get ready and come, and bring with you our nephew, you should not come without him... because I am now old, and I wish to see you here in this land, because I cannot go for now to Spain...” Later that year, Domingo Lazaro obtained a license to travel by himself. Another example of residents asking for family members to live in the colonies is this excerpt from a letter that Luis Jimenez wrote to his sister Antonia Jimenez in 1589:

“Before this time I told Your Mercy how I wish for you to come here to stay with me, because you are there alone and poor, and with no one to go to. I, thanks

ser alli donde muere infinita gente, que en ninguna parte me hallé mejor que allí, gracias a Dios. Pero yo comí muy poca fruta, que es lo que más daño suele hacer... “. 80

80 Nombre de Dios 4.VII.1569 in Carta 305, Enrique Otte 1993: 269. “... Muy gran merced recibire procure de se aviar y venir, y traiga consigo a nuestro sobrino, que no venga sin el, si ser pudiere, porque ya estoy viejo, y deseo mucho verlos aca en esta tierra, porque yo no puedo ir por ahora a Espana... proque al presente yo estoy en esta ciudad del Nombre de Dios, que soy cura, y aqui me hallaran, si vinieren y yo estuviere con salud, y si acaso no me mudo por amor de la salud, porque ando enfermo a ratos”
to God, have some land and goods that I cultivated in this land and in Peru. And now I have my residence in Panama City, and because I am old and lacking health...I wish very much that Your Mercy would come in the first fleet, and bring my niece with you, and, if you are to come, it is with this condition that, since I do not have children nor any other closer heir, I would like to leave her endowed and taken care of; there are good comforts here... n81

Arriving to the American colonies was often full of social advantages. Marriage became an opportunity to improve business and acquire new social status (Lugar 1986). Arranged marriages guaranteed the extension of businesses and later created mercantile clans in the American colonies. Even though it appears that the Spanish traveled most of the times by themselves, there are many cases of entire families traveling together or wives joining their husbands in the colonies after years apart. For example, in 1559, Diego Virues wrote a letter to his wife Ana Lopez de Leon in Seville: "...this is only to let you know how convenient it is for me that you come to this land, one for your happiness, and the other for my peace... You should come with my sister Beatriz and Barrasa and his wife, with two black servants... You should say to Barrasa to come with you and his wife, that he will do well here...". 82 However, the request of family to travel was not always answered. A year later,

81 Nombre de Dios 26.V. 1589 in Carta 312, Enrique Otte 1993: 275. "...Antes de ahora he dicho a v.m. lo que yo deseo que venga por acá a estarse conmigo, pues alla esta sola y pobre, y sin tener a quien acudir. Yo, bendito Dios, tengo alguna hacienda y sustancia que he granjeado en esta tierra y en el Peru. Y ahora tengo mi asiento en la ciudad de Panama, y por verme viejo y con falta de salud... deseo mucho que v.m. se venga en la primera flota, y traiga a mi sobrina consigo, que, si que si ha de venir, ha de ser con esta condicion que, pues no tengo hijos ni otro heredero mas propincuo, querría dejarla remedada y puesta en estado, que hay aqui buenas comodidades..."

82 Nombre de Dios 30.X.1559 in Carta 300 Enrique Otte 1993: 267. "...esta solo servira para avisaros como a mi me conviene que os vengais a esta tierra, lo uno por vuestro contento, y lo otro por mi quietud... Vendra con vos mi hermana Beatriz y Barrasa y su mujer, con dos negras de vuestro servicio....Diréis a Barrasa que se venga con vos con su mujer, que aca le ira bien..."
Virues wrote again to his wife, asking her again to travel with Barrasa or any other married man.\(^\text{83}\) Apparently, Virues' request was finally answered because in 1560 there is a license for Ana Lopez de Leon to go to Nombre de Dios, along with her sister-in-law Juana de Virues, Diego de Barrasa and his wife Basilisa del Tejo, and two slaves. However, there is no document confirming her actual trip and the license includes Virues sister, who apparently was already in Nombre de Dios in 1560. In any case, Virues situation was not isolated.

Of the 761 recorded European immigrants, only 77 (10\%) were women (Figure 4.11). It is possible to observe in the migration fluctuations that the movement of European women to Nombre de Dios was on a smaller scale than the male migration, and during the same periods when more European men entered the colony, at least during the first part of the century. Of the European women, 40 declared their marital status: 27 were married (34\%), 9 single (12\%), and 5 widows (6\%). Perhaps the presence of non-Spanish females influenced European female migration at the end of the century, but as has been stated, Nombre de Dios did not have a significant native population, and African women were far from common. Not counting slaves, whose numbers are barely recorded, the highest percentage of women entering the colony were married. Still, since non-Spanish women were more available at the end of the century and migration from Spain was expensive, men without high economic means could see local women as the only opportunity for relationships. Thus, the availability of non-Spanish women may have resulted in the decrease of the migration rate of European women at the end of the century. I will give more details later about relationships between Spanish and non-Spanish.  

\(^{83}\) Nombre de Dios 20.V.1560 in Carta 302, Enrique Otte 1993: 268
Of 684 European men, 94 declared their marital status as follows: 61 married (9%), 33 single (5%), and 2 widows (0.2%) (Figure 4.12). As previously mentioned, not all married men initially traveled with their spouse. Kinsbruner argues that even though Spanish American colonies were organized around nuclear families, the ideal of the family fell apart, especially during the early colonial period. High mortality rates and economic interests affected the family structure. Men tended to marry when economically secure; thus, the husband was usually older than his wife, contributing to the frequency of widows (Kinsbruner 2005). Deagan suggests that the tendency of single men to dedicate themselves to business before marrying created settlements with a high percentage of male inhabitants. Predominantly male population were especially common in ports, and in fact throughout the early Spanish colonies. The early cities of La Isabela, Puerto Real, and Saint Augustine have been studied and they all have in common a strong Spanish male presence with very few Spanish women (Deagan and Koch 1983).
The rupture of the family structure led the Crown to create regulations for the migration of married men. After 1530, the migration of married men without their wives was prohibited, and in 1538, the Crown mandated all married men to return to Spain within two years if their wives were not with them (Mena Garcia 1984). For example, in 1535, the queen ordered Hernando Alvarez to return from Nombre de Dios to live with his family in Seville. In 1536, Beatriz Hernandez asked the queen to order her husband, merchant Hernan de Alvarez, to return to Spain. Even though many years passed following the order for spouses to return to Spain, the problem apparently continued. In 1559, Diego Lopez was ordered to return to live with his wife Ysabel de Medina. Apparently, Lopez left Spain four years before, leaving his wife with debts and no financial support.

The absence of husbands was not always seen as a negative by their wives; on the contrary, their husbands' activities in the colonies could be more profitable than in Spain. In 1548, Ines Dominguez asked for a license extension for her husband,

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84 AGI Panama 235 L6\1\104. 1535. 85 AGI Panama 235 L6\1\104. 1536. 86 AGI Signatura\AGI\Panama 236 L9\1\579
apothecary Diego de Pineda. She explained that her husband’s shop in Nombre de Dios provided enough financial support for her and their children. Of the 761 European immigrants to Nombre de Dios, 88 women and men (12%) declared themselves married. Even though it is usually argued that a large percentage of married men did not live with their wives in the colonies, in Nombre de Dios the case is the contrary (Figure 4.13). Of the married European men, 41 (67%) either traveled with their wives or were joined by their families later on, while 12 (20%) had their wives in Spain. Of the European females, 26 (96%) are known to have been with their husbands in Nombre de Dios. The discrepancy in the numbers between females (26) and males (41) with spouses in Nombre de Dios is due to two reasons; either the records are incomplete or the men were married to non-Spanish women. From all the records of married people, only 4 marriages are registered between Spanish and non-Spanish individuals. One marriage is between a Spanish man and a free African woman, while the others are between Spanish men and mulattoes. All these marriages were recorded in a census from 1577, when all the free Africans and mulattoes were called to register to pay tribute to the Crown.

Even though marriage was an institution imposed by the Crown, and marriages between Spanish men and other ethnic groups was allowed, not all the Spanish men had legitimate relations with women in the colonies. Slave masters used their slaves as concubines, but few were legally married. Five of the free African women reported in the 1577 census were said to have illegitimate relations and two of them had mulatto children. All the women identified as having any kind of relationships with Spaniards were free. Mena García suggests that usually there were

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87 AGI Signatura\AGI\Panama 235 L8\1\370
few relations between Spanish and African residents because only lower class Spanish individuals were engaged in activities involving contact with Africans. However, the Spanish from Panama City with interethnic relations did not follow this rule (Mena Garcia 1984). In the context of Nombre de Dios, the reluctance to legalize relationships could be interpreted as the attempts of Spanish to maintain their status.

Africans arrived in Nombre de Dios as slaves but many of them acquired their freedom in different ways. The legal acquisition of freedom with no charge was the result of the gratitude of the owners to their slaves in recognition for their service. This was extremely rare. More often, freedom was granted as the result of a newborn child from relationships between Spanish men and enslaved Africans (Mena Garcia 1984). Some slaves were freed as a result of their heroic actions. For example, Pedro Yalongo acquired his freedom after his owner Alonso de Sotomayor petitioned for it as a reward for helping defend the town during Drake’s attack in 1596.89

89 AGI Panama 237 L13 F2r-2v. 1597.
Although free Africans were recognized as members of urban society, they lived in Nombre de Dios under different regulations. In 1548, when runaway slaves started organizing *palenques* [maroon settlements] and attacking the town, the *Cabildo* ordered that no African, free or enslaved, could be outside after dark. The bell in Nombre de Dios would sound and the Africans could not be on the streets or they would be punished with 100 whips and sent to jail (Mena Garcia 1984). Furthermore, free African women could not use the same clothing as Spanish women. Following sumptuary laws all over the Spanish colonies, only African women married to Spanish men were allowed to use pearl and gold earrings, necklaces, and skirts with velvet ornaments (Mena Garcia 1984).

Despite regulations and social differences, free Africans contributed to the development of the town. In 1574, the Crown ordered that free Africans and mulattoes had to pay tribute every year as a ‘gratuity’ to the Crown for allowing them to live in the colonies. And in 1570, to avoid being recruited as soldiers, free Africans in Nombre de Dios donated 500 pesos to the war against the maroons (Mena Garcia 1984). In 1577, the growing population of free Africans and mulattoes led the Crown to ask them to present themselves to the officials of the town and provide names, marital status, and number of children.\(^9\) Fifty-one Africans and mulattoes men and women were registered to live in Nombre de Dios at the time. At the end of the sixteenth century, the African and mulatto presence increased even more for two reasons. First, the construction of Portobelo’s stone fortifications and the need to defend Nombre de Dios brought Africans enlisted as soldiers,\(^9\) and second, the

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\(^9\) En diez de octubre de 1577 años presentó Alonso de Herrera en nombre de sus partes (ff 1-185). In Jopling 1994: 445

\(^9\) Contaduría 1468. 1597. Acuerdo de presidente y oidores, fiscal y oficiales reales para que los tenientes de oficiales de la ciudad del Nombre de Dios den a los soldados morenos de la parcialidad de Bayano sustento de maíz y carne por tiempo de un mes (ff 1-7). In Jopling 1994: 470
relocation of maroons to the free town of Santiago del Principe, a half league away from the Spanish town. I will later discuss the composition and demography of enslaved and maroon Africans in and around Nombre de Dios in more detail.

The relationships between Spanish men and African or mulatto women often resulted in children, which increased the population and its heterogeneity. According to the 1577 census, 7 mulatto and 3 African children were living in Nombre de Dios (Figure 4.14). However, it is very likely that the quantity of mulatto children was larger and increased over the years. Spanish children also migrated to the colonies. They came as part of families, but also to help out other settlers when they were old or ill. On various occasions, unmarried men with no children asked for boys to travel to the colonies to help them out, perhaps in exchange for financial security. For example, in 1584 Antonio Correa wrote from Nombre de Dios to his brother Diego Fernandez Correa in Valdemoro, Spain:

“...And when the boy that I requested travels... he should not bring more than one travel dress, it should be good, like that of a son of an honorable man. And he should come well instructed, that despite his childhood he should not say or do something that will make him appear lesser, or as a person of low respect... And warn him that he should deal in Seville with people very punctiliously... and Your Mercy says that he should have finished his grammar lessons, Your Mercy should try to make him understand how important it is not to forget that in Seville the books he requests will be given to him, to bring them with him, and always practice until arrives to me, then I will be his tutor...”

92 Nombre de Dios 20.V.1584 in Carta 311, Enrique Otte 1993: 274 “...Y cuanto a la venida de ese niño que yo pedí, lo deseo... No ha menester traer mas de un vestido de camino, que sea bueno, y como hijo de hombre honrado. Y el venga también instruido, que por niñez no diga o haga algunas
Apparently, young boys would travel to the colonies if their future seemed secured. The New World offered a comfortable and secure future for young girls too. During the sixteenth century, 29 Spanish boys and girls entered the town, most of them with their families but some planning to join their uncles. Later in the century, the Crown granted a vast array of rights to single women to attract them to move to the New World. Since merchants tended to marry younger women, family sizes increased because of the merchants’ economic capabilities to sustain larger numbers of children (Kinsbruner 2005).

Figure 4.14: Children moving to and/or living in Nombre de Dios in the sixteenth century.

"cosas que den materia de tenerle en menos, o por de gente de poca estima... Y adviertale que ha de tratar en Sevilla gente muy puntuosa, y que le han de dar muchos alcances por cosas que me tocan a mi cerca de parentescos y aparentar... y pues que me dice v.m. que tendrá ya acabado los cursos de la gramática, procure v.m. darle a entender cuanto le importa no dejarlo olvidar, que en Sevilla le daran los libros que el pidiere, que se los traiga consigo, y se ejercite siempre hasta que llegue a mi mano, que entonces yo seré su ayo, y cuanto a esto no digo mas"
A town of merchants or bureaucrats?

Historians have argued that the Nombre de Dios population was made up of merchants who also held government positions (Mena García 1992, Díaz López 2001, among others). Although it is true that the majority of the registered population were some type of merchants, there were some inhabitants with other occupations living in the town. From the 854 individuals in the sample, it was possible to identify the occupations of 337 people. During the life of the town, 23 different occupations were identified (Table 4.5). Although the majority of the population with identified occupations had jobs related to commercial and government activities, 10% of the population had other occupations. During the development of the town, the diversity of occupations increased. At its height (1560s-1580s), the occupations were more diverse than in any other period (Figure 4.15 and Table 4.6). Although the diversity of occupations increased over time, most jobs were related to government. The government officials represented in figure 4.15 were those that only held government positions. One of the most frequent complaints regarding the government in Nombre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apothecary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pulpero</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astillero</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sacristan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber and surgeon</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sailor</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Slave (mule train/carguero)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Slave</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseshoer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Silversmith</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horticulturist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Priest</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosier [calcetero]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Ventero</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only official positions</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>Vicar</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5: Occupations of Nombre de Dios residents.
Figure 4.15: Frequency of occupations in Nombre de Dios distributed by decades (Cont. next page)
Cont. Figure 4.15: Frequency of occupations in Nombre de Dios distributed by decades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1519-1530</th>
<th>1531-1540</th>
<th>1541-1550</th>
<th>1551-1560</th>
<th>1561-1570</th>
<th>1571-1580</th>
<th>1581-1590</th>
<th>1591-1600</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Astillero</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apothecary</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barber and surgeon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseshoer</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Horticulturist</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosier</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Calcetero]</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Official position</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priest</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulpero</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacristan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silversmith</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slave [mule train/cargero]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slave</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>121</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventero</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6: Occupations of population of Nombre de Dios.
de Dios was that merchants were also officials, a likely cause of corruption and favoritism. However, surviving records count only a small group of 15 individuals identified as merchants and with government positions at some point (Figure 4.16). I will address the inconveniences that resulted from the high quantity of officials in the port later in the section related to government structure. Even though the percentage of officials was higher, the existence of a large percentage of merchants and craftsmen with profitable occupations permitted the government, religious, and physical structures in town to survive. For example, in 1548 and 1555, the Cabildo wrote that the residents of the town had been paying the parish priest's salary and had maintained the buildings with donations. 93

Even though most of the residents of Nombre de Dios were merchants, the population was not homogenous. Access to widely varying networks in Spain and the

Figure 4.16: Individuals with official and non-official occupations.

93 AGI Panama 32 N4\1\1. 1548. AGI Panama 32 N9\1\1. 1555.
American colonies created inequality among them. Important merchants were more likely to occupy official positions and bring better quality merchandise to market. The only way to observe this, at this time, is through inventories of deceased people in the town. It is possible to observe differences among merchants based on the merchandise they possessed. For example, in the 1570s, Andres Palomino\(^{94}\) and Francisco Valencia\(^{95}\) died in the town, and the inventories of their possessions suggest different access to merchandise (Table 4.7)

Social differences, however, did not prevent Nombre de Dios’s residents from taking actions to help out with difficult situations in the town. Apparently, among the residents there was a sense of agency and communal spirit. Residents continually donated funds to rebuild buildings and maintain the road communicating with Panama. They also contributed to help sustain soldiers during periods of distress, usually caused by piracy and marronage. In 1568, the *alcalde mayor* Captain Juan de Umaña reported that the vecinos were both feeding and allowing soldiers from Panama to live in their houses as they were in the port to protect it.\(^{96}\) The actions of the residents were probably the result of the delayed responses from the Crown and the slow Spanish bureaucratic system. To a certain degree they were on their own.

Although the main problems in the town were related to foreigners’ attacks, other conflicts among the population emerged when the religious and government structures were weak. In the 1560s, Panama did not have a bishop to oversee clergymen. Thus, in 1563, the clergymen were apparently interfering with government decisions due to the lack of control from a bishop.\(^{97}\) Another type of

\(^{94}\) AGI Contratacion 208B N2R2\#1. 1571 Copy of original inventory is in Appendix 1 Document 3

\(^{95}\) AGI Contratacion 201 N2R4\#1. 1575 Copy of original inventory is in Appendix 1 Document 4

\(^{96}\) AGI Patronato 267 N1 R46\#1

\(^{97}\) AGI Panama 32 N12\#1. 1564.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Andres Palomino inventory</th>
<th>Francisco Valencia inventory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eight bowls with their stands</td>
<td>A sword with its leather scabbard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One velvet skirt</td>
<td>Six metal buttons with gold roses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One taffeta skirt with green velvet ornaments and gold buttons</td>
<td>Black velvet trousers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forty-four locks for boxes with their keys.</td>
<td>One sword belt with black velvet strips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frayed brown velvet shoes</td>
<td>An old cordovan jacket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One plain black doublet</td>
<td>Old suede trousers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frayed suede shoes with velvet ornaments</td>
<td>A cape and a coat of frayed cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two frayed caps [gorra] one of velvet and the other of satin</td>
<td>Old brown taffeta shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two velvet underpants with brown velvet trimming</td>
<td>A very old pair of blue cloth shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dos old doublets from Holland</td>
<td>An old doublet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some clothing for the Sea</td>
<td>Another old doublet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four frayed men shirts</td>
<td>Old blue cloth stockings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One linen pillow with blue silk strips</td>
<td>A very old coat and old boots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A peace of black taffeta that is six and a half yards long</td>
<td>Two frayed cloth shirts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight shirts from Rouen with Holland collars</td>
<td>Other two frayed shirts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixteen small velvet boxes, in one a gold chain with an image with opal and glass</td>
<td>Other two men shirts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One pair of old boots</td>
<td>Other two shirts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two harquebus with ammunition</td>
<td>Other two men shirts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two bonnets of “Moorish” cloth</td>
<td>Two frayed cloth shirts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forty four dozens of silk laces of colors</td>
<td>Other two men shirts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two napkins and some table cloths</td>
<td>Two men shirts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black velvet shoes</td>
<td>A head pressurer (?) and other old trousers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One 18-year-old African called Felipe de Sevilla creole</td>
<td>Some old table cloths and eight cloths for the table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another frayed green skirt with green velvet ornaments</td>
<td>Two shoemaker’s lasts and a old cloth cape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two pillows with strips of net</td>
<td>A chest where all the things were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelve hanks of thread for shoemakers</td>
<td>An emerald ring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three pairs of towels of homemade linen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three chains of glass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirty three pairs of women’s mother-of-pearl buckles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelve pairs of women’s boots with heels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenty two pairs of black shoes, two for men and the rest for boys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hundred and fourteen pairs of shoes for children and boys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One sword and dagger with its old black velvet casing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One scale and its weights to weigh silver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7: Comparison between inventories of two merchants in Nombre de Dios
conflict common in Nombre de Dios was the mismanagement of deceased people’s property. For example, in 1567, Juan Romero wrote the following in a letter:

‘‘...know Your Mercy that on August eleven of [15]67 my brother Alonso Romero died in Nombre de Dios. I came to collect his possessions, and I cannot do it. He had them invested [in goods], and what he invested was sold at a loss such that more than two thousand pesos were deducted from the cost, and for the rest I am in a lawsuit with the executor, that is Alonso de Cevallos, and I have had him prisoner for two months now, but he says he does not have money, and because they know they will not be hanged, they steal people’s estates’’ 98

The mismanagement of deceased possessions and investments caused continual lawsuits between residents and merchants from other colonies. These conflicts lasted for many years and sometimes it was required for the beneficiary to go or send a representative to claim the inheritance. After the lawsuits were settled and debts were collected, the process had cost so much that the inheritance was either very small or completely gone.

Other conflicts in the town were caused by the intensive periods of commercial activity and the transitory nature of the port. Since 1535, bishop Tomas de Berlanga described the town as a ‘‘...[a] cave of thieves and graveyard of pilgrims, because I certify to Your Highness that is frightening to see the extortions and

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98‘‘...Sepa v.m. que a once de agosto de 67 (?) murio mi hermano Alonso Romero en el Nombre de Dios. Yo vine a cobrar la hacienda, y no la puedo cobrar. El tenia empleado, y lo que tenia empleado, lo malvendieron, donde se perdio mas de dos mil pesos del costo, y por lo demas que el alcanzó, ando a pleito con el albacea, que es un Alonso de Cevallos, y ha que lo tengo preso dos meses, que dice no tiene dineros, y como saben que no lo han de ahorcar, se alzan con las haciendas...’’ (Nombre de Dios 12.IV.1567 in Carta 308, Enrique Otte 1993: 271).
injustices that are done there...". The Crown’s reply to bishop Berlanga was to make people maintain habits such as going to mass on Sundays and holidays instead of buying and selling merchandise. Apparently, preserving the Iberian lifestyle would correct the residents’ behavior.

Nombre de Dios’s function as a gate to other colonies also meant conflict because of the number of people moving through town, and the desire of some officials to control transit to the southern colonies. In 1546, a group of Spanish led by Francisco Pizarro (not the conquistador as he was murdered in 1541) and Pedro Cabrera tried to block migration to Peru. While attempting to regain control of the port, Melchor Verdugo took some merchandise and burned some houses where Pizarro and Cabrera were supposedly staying. Apparently, the houses belonged to Nicolas Sanchez de Aranburu who started a lawsuit against Verdugo. The investigation lasted over ten years and when it was finally over, the Crown ordered to Verdugo to pay Aranburu’s heirs since he was already dead. Pizarro and Verdugo’s case was not the only one of its kind. In 1572, the Cabildo reported that there was suspicion among the residents of the port. According to a priest, there were some foreigners and Spanish planning to sack and burn the city.

The merchant character of the population of Nombre de Dios was the result of the absence of social structures present in most of the American colonies. For

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99 Patronato 194/27. Carta a su majestad de fray Tomás de Berlanga, Obispo de aquella diosa describiendo aquella tierra y diciendo que la ciudad de Nombre de Dios es cueva de ladrones y sepultura de peregrinos; y que debería trasladarse a la embocadura del Río Chagre que también describe... Panama 27 de febrero de 1535. In Jopling 1994: 8. "...Convén que vuestra Majestad mande que el pueblo del Nombre de Dios, que es cueva de ladrones y sepultura de peregrinos, porque certifico a vuestra majestad que es grima ver las extorsiones e injusticias que allí se hacen ..."
100 AGI Panama 235 L6\1\345. 1537
101 AGI Justicia 1046 N2. 1547. Andres de Arauca y Nicolas de Aramburu y otros. 1547
103 AGI Panama 11 F113r-115v. 1572. Carta de Pedro de Ortega
example, the institution of the *encomienda*, which proved to be crucial at the beginning of Spanish colonization, was absent in Nombre de Dios due to the fast disappearance of natives in the region. The chance of controlling native subjects made other American colonies like Peru more appealing to incoming Spanish men, in particular, and permitted the diversification of activities, as well as the expansion of social and governmental positions of other colonies. Even though the population of Nombre de Dios was mostly merchants, this should not be seen as a handicap but rather as part of the reason why the town lasted for many years. The merchants unique financial capacity helped to solve or diminish problems and maintain structures in the port, where as many towns founded by conquistadors quickly disappeared due to poverty and isolation.

**Are there any natives left?**

The successful colonization of America largely depended on the existence of native groups and their exploitation by the Spanish. The *encomienda* was a Spanish institution that allowed settlers to exploit the Indies by demanding tribute and labor from native populations. The *encomiendas* were given to the first settlers of the cities based on their “virtues” (or class) and services. *Encomenderos* were rewarded with natives, and they usually headed the local aristocracy (Mena Garcia 1984). That is, they were *vecinos*, landowners, eligible as members of a *cabildo*, and/or occupied government positions. The merchant class was generally excluded from holding any *encomienda* and any government position due to potential conflicts of interest. Lugar argues that there were many exceptions to this rule because of the growing commercialization of economy and society (Lugar 1986).
The first reference to native populations in Nombre de Dios dates to 1510, when Pedrarias Davila mentioned that when Diego de Nicuesa arrived in the bay there were natives with gold. However, Nicuesa also said that the natives declared that the gold was not from the area. According to Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, in 1519, when Diego de Albitez arrived at Nombre de Dios, the natives living in the bay identified themselves as *Chuchures* (Jay 2002). Albitez informed Davila that the native group claimed that they had arrived from Honduras in larger numbers, but rapidly decreased because of the ill environment. It is not clear if the native group that Nicuesa encountered was the same that Albitez reported.

The natives that survived the harsh environment, or more likely, introduced diseases, of Nombre de Dios were destined to face harder times. The Spanish settled the port in 1519, using them for the construction of the *Camino Real* and the transportation of merchandise. That same year, a trial to evaluate Pedrarias Davila's actions as Governor of Panama took place. Among the information reported, a witness stated that “...he [Pedrarias Davila] agreed to bring and brought natives to the Camino of Nombre de Dios to this city [Panama] with loads as if they were animals; for this reason many of the natives are dead and others rose up and ran away...”

The only report of an *encomienda* in Nombre de Dios is from 1529. Clemente de Campo was a member of the expeditions of Pedrarias Davila. He arrived to Castilla del Oro with Davila and was one of the first Spanish settlers of Nombre de

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104 Patronato 26/4. Memoria que da Pedrarias sobre la provision a Vasco de Nuñez de Balboa de la gobernación y adelantamiento (3 ff.). In Jopling 1994: 21
105 Patronato 26/5 Relación de los sucesos de Pedrarias Dávila en las provincias de Tierra Firme o Castilla del Oroy de lo ocurrido en el descubrimiento de la mar del Sur y costas del Perú y Nicaragua escrita por el Adelantado Pascual de Andagoya. In Tovar Pinzon 1993: 121.
106 Panama 359. Interrogatorio a que fueron sometidos los testigos presentados por Pedrarias Dávila en el juicio de residencia introducido por el licenciado Salmerón; Pedrarias: Cargos y descargos (ff. 175-176). In Jopling 1994: 156
He was rewarded with the only encomienda reported so far for this port, while other settlers were rewarded with a few natives as servants. In 1529, Clemente de Campo reported that he pacified the chief of Secativa and he brought some natives with him to live in the town. This apparently took place years before 1529, because the purpose of the document was to ask for permission to return to Spain with as many natives as he could, leaving the rest of the group to his son in America. In order to prove to the Crown that he was an honest man, Campo presented several witnesses. One of the testimonies described the relation between Campo and the native chief:

"...he said he has seen the said chief in the house of Clemente de campo sitting at his table and eating bread and meat and drinking wine from Castile and he has seen that the mentioned chief and his indians have always been well treated, and he believes according to the love he showed to the chief that he would administer him according to the regulations of Your Highness; and he knows the chief did not have any food but that which the said Clemente de Campo gave him and his women and children and indians and this witness saw it many times in his house..."
The situation described between Campo and the natives in his house was not unusual. Spaniards were required to have a house in town and were forbidden to inhabit native villages. This measure was to protect the natives from abuse and to maintain the Spaniards' social status (Smith 1968). Apparently, Campo never returned to Spain. In 1534, an evaluation of the duties of Francisco Barrionuevo revealed that Clemente de Campo had moved to Acla, in the Darien region, where he died. However, before his death he sent the natives he had to Acla and left them to his son. Mena García suggests that by 1537 Nombre de Dios did not have any natives held in encomiendas, while Acla had only a hundred, and Panama had no more than 120 (Mena García 1984). The Panamanian Isthmus was thus quite unlike Mexico or Peru at this time, where large encomiendas were common.

The transfer of the native group from Nombre de Dios to Acla was not an isolated event. The native population of Panama quickly declined due to two major episodes of involuntary migration. First, when Pedrarias Davila was dismissed as governor and sent an expedition to Nicaragua, he took a large number of the Panamanian natives with him. Second, in 1534, Francisco Pizarro (the conquistador) took more Panamanian natives to Peru. Besides Pizarro’s native relocation, those Spaniards moving to Peru tended to take at least one native woman with them as a servant to grind corn and make bread (Jopling 1994).

Only three more natives are mentioned in the sixteenth-century records that were analyzed for Nombre de Dios. In 1527, two of them were given as a gift from the governor to Juan Alonso de Plasencia, a vecino from Nombre de Dios. After his death, he donated one to the church and the other was being asked for by Plasencia’s

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son in Seville\textsuperscript{110}. Unfortunately, the governor, instead of following Plasencia’s testament, took the native donated to the church.\textsuperscript{111} The willing of these individuals suggests enslavement, which was fast becoming illegal. After 1549, the Crown, in an attempt to reduce the abuse to natives, abolished native slavery and assigned the Church to oversee the \textit{encomiendas}. However, these regulations did not stop the exploitation and mistreatment of the natives by the Spanish.

In 1552, a travel license to return from Spain was granted to Maria de Morales who claimed to be a native from Nombre de Dios. There is no more information about Morales. It is possible that after the 1530s there were still a few natives left in Nombre de Dios. In 1552, the governor of Panama, Sancho de Clavijo, funded a \textit{pueblo de indios} [town for natives] that was two leagues from Panama City. He reported that some of the natives were from Nombre de Dios.\textsuperscript{112}

The fast disappearance of the native population resulted in a low degree of \textit{mestizaje} [interracial and/or intercultural mixing], and the disappearance of \textit{encomiendas}. A 1607 census shows the existence of a small population of \textit{mestizos} (children of native and Spanish parents) in the region of Panama. Even though the information is from Panama City where there were more natives than in Nombre de Dios, the data illustrates the situation of the region. In this 1607 census, Mena Garcia found that from the 5,702 inhabitants in Panama City, only 64 were explicitly identified as mestizos. That is only 1.1 \% of the population (Mena Garcia 1984). The absence of \textit{mestizos} in Nombre de Dios and in Panama should not be interpreted as the absence of \textit{mestizaje}, but rather simply the rarity of Spanish-indigenous unions.

\textsuperscript{110} AGI Panama 234 L3 F22v-23r. 1527
\textsuperscript{111} AGI Panama 234 L3 F24r. 1527.
\textsuperscript{112} Patronato 26/27. Relación de lo que pasa sobre la fundación y población de los indios de este reino de Tierra Firme que Sancho de clavijo, gobernador que fue en el fundó y puso en libertad, por mandado de su majestad y del estado en que al presente están los dicho indios y los pueblos dellos (ff 1-3). In Jopling 1994: 258
As previously mentioned, *mestizaje* occurred in Nombre de Dios as a result of the relations between Spanish and Africans.

Finally, the absence of the *encomienda* as a tool to sustain Nombre de Dios was compensated for by the intense commercial activities and with the introduction of a large number of slaves. The absence of natives led the Spanish to look for another source of labor. African slavery, which merchants could afford, fulfilled this need.

**Slavery and Rebellions**

The absence of a native population in Nombre de Dios led settlers to import slaves to fulfill the needs for domestic service and other labors. The introduction of slaves began in 1510 when the Crown authorized the introduction of slaves to be sold to the colonists (Mena Garcia 1984). At the same time, the Crown authorized immigrants and Crown officials to send their slaves to America. The ownership of slaves became a symbol of prestige. According to Mena Garcia, low ranking government employees such as treasurers, accountants, or clergy, introduced two slaves, while high ranking government officials such as governors, oidores, and bishops, introduced three or four (Mena Garcia 1984).

The enslaved population at the beginning of the century in Nombre de Dios is unknown. However, there are three requests of settlers asking for a license to bring white (e.g. “Moorish” or North African) slaves in 1535.¹¹³ This suggests that perhaps enslaved black Africans were a limited commodity for the colonists during the first years of the settlement. These are the only reports of white slaves in Nombre de

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¹¹³ AGI Panama 234 L5 F202r. 1535. Panama 234 L5 F216r-216v. 1535. Panama 234 L5 F205r-205v. 1535.
Dios. The only two other cases of individuals traveling with personal slaves to the colonies date to the 1560s and 1570s. Each only passed with one or two enslaved Africans. The entrance of enslaved Africans was not always an uneventful process. Apparently, the officials in Nombre de Dios followed the registries very carefully when they concerned slaves. The following three cases illustrate the situation. In 1534, two white slaves were confiscated because they arrived without license. The officials not only confiscated them but they also sold them to other Spanish buyers. In 1553, Alonso Perez complained to the Crown because officials confiscated one of his slaves. Apparently, the official registry had one male and one female slave but in reality he brought two female slaves. The third case is in 1575 when Antonio Díaz de Zamora made a complaint that his slave was confiscated because the registry said that her name was Isabel and it was not.

As previously mentioned, as early as 1510 the Crown authorized the introduction of enslaved Africans for sale. Many slaves clearly passed through Nombre de Dios on their way to Peru, but only two cases have been found so far for contracts of importation of slaves. One document from 1535 and the other from 1553 note at least twenty slaves being introduced. However, the 1535 contract included both white and black Africans, while the later one was apparently just sub-Saharan Africans. These contracts must have been more common because the quantity of enslaved Africans kept growing over the century.

In 1575, the oidor Alfonso de Criado de Castilla reported that there were 500 enslaved Africans working on 25 ships that transported cloth and other merchandise.

114 AGI Indiferente 2080 N40. 1560. Indiferente 2085 N104. 1572. Indiferente 2086 N71. 1574.
115 AGI Panama 234 L5\1\418. 1534.
116 AGI Panama 235 L7 F197r-197v. 1554.
117 AGI Panama 235 L6 F106v-107r. 1575.
118 AGI Panama 234 L5\1\419. 1535
through the Chagres River, and other 500 serving in town. During the last third of the century, the Crown officially forbade the introduction of enslaved Africans in Tierra Firme (Greater Panama) because of the maroon raids. This regulation diminished the introduction of slaves but was never completely obeyed (Mena Garcia 1984).

The large numbers of imported slaves relative to the European population were justified by the construction and maintenance of caminos and the transportation of merchandise between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Mena García suggests that enslaved Africans had the hard jobs such as porter, axe men, muleteer, and boatmen, among others; while free Africans and mulattoes would be blacksmiths, carpenters, lathe operators, tailors, etc (Mena Garcia 1984).

The hard work imposed on Africans and the poor treatment by the Spanish led many slaves to run away. The first slave rebellions reported in the region were in the 1530s. In 1534, Pascual de Andagoya sought to buy two dogs from Nombre de Dios and cut the vegetation around the town to protect the population from maroons. However, in 1536, Andagoya reported attacks on the town: "...in the town it is obvious that they [maroons] rob and enter many houses and they have done and do many crimes...and that town and all the land would receive much harm and the road from this sea to that one would not be safe...". Unfortunately, Andagoya’s fears came true. During the rest of the century, there were continual attacks on mule trains and in the town.

119 Nombre de Dios May 7, 1575. Sumaria descripción del reino de Tierra Firme, llamado Castilla del Oro, que está sujeto a la real audiencia de la ciudad de Panamá, por el Alonso Criado de Castilla, oidor decano de la misma. In Jopling 1994: 14
Due to successful attacks on the townspeople and the increasing number of maroons, in 1549 the first organized *palenque* [maroon settlement] emerged in the San Miguel Gulf. However, this group was short lived. In 1551, its head, Felipillo ["Little Philip"], was captured and executed. Even though the *palenque* was destroyed, it is suggested that by the middle of the century there were approximately 800 maroons in the region around Nombre de Dios (Mena Garcia 1984).

The attacks on the town intensified after Felipillo’s death. In the 1550s, there were numerous reports of attacks and kidnapping of enslaved Africans. For example, in 1552 and 1561, enslaved women were captured while washing in the Fato River (east of the town) and in other waters called El Chorrillo (unknown location).121 Also, an attack on a house in the town in 1569 was reported. A group of maroons had entered the house of Pedro Gonzalez de Meceta, a distinguished resident of the town, and attacked him and his family.122 Ironically, one of the solutions proposed by the Spanish to stop these attacks was to introduce more slaves.123

The maroon problem intensified in the 1570s. Three large groups of maroons have been identified for this decade in Panama: Bayano, Cerro de Cabra, and Portobelo. From these three groups the most widely known is Bayano because it survived the capture of its leader and was the most successful in attacking the Spanish population (Drolet 1962). The *palenque* of Bayano was supposedly founded by an African prince or king from Guinea. It was probably the largest maroon settlement in Panama and was composed of several villages dispersed between the north and south coasts. They were built on contiguous hills serving as forts or villages for women,

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121 Justicia 378/8. Quarto legajo de la mencionada residencia tomada a Sancho de Clavijo de Tierra Firme (ff. 1-5). In Jopling 1994:349. 1552. AGI Patronato 193 R38\1\1. 1561
122 Patronato 151/5/1. Probanza de los meritos y servicios de Pedro Gonzalez de Meceta en la conquista de la provincia de Veragua con el general Francisco Vazquez (ff.82-88). In Jopling 1994: 338. 1569.
123 AGI Panama 32 N12\1\1
children, and elders (Drolet 1962). The widespread locations facilitated the attacks on different towns and the *caminos* connecting Nombre de Dios and Panama City. In 1575, merchandise leaving Nombre de Dios could only be transported if there were soldiers accompanying the trains; otherwise, it was very likely the maroons would attack. There is little information regarding the maroons from Cerro de Cabra [Goat Hill]. It is simply known that they were also a problem in the 1570s and were pacified in the 1580s.

Finally, the maroons from Portobelo were probably the group that caused the most problems for Nombre de Dios. Due to maroon attacks, merchant ships limited their stay in port only to those days of trade fairs. In 1579, the maroons of Portobelo were pacified and, apparently, the *Camino* and the town were thereafter safe. In 1580, the pacified maroons were relocated to a free town known as Santiago del Principe. This town was only a quarter league, or easy walking distance, away from Nombre de Dios. The first reaction of the Nombre de Dios *Cabildo* was to ask that Santiago del Principe be integrated as part of Nombre de Dios’ territory. The grounds for this petition was that the Nombre de Dios *Cabildo* would ultimately have to handle the legal issues of the new town anyway. The Africans in Santiago del Principe were supplied with tools and had the ability to choose their authorities under a Spanish governor, Antonio de Saucedo. In addition to the governor, thirty soldiers

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124 ANP Archivo General de Indias, Simancas secular, Audiencia de panama, Cartas y expedientes del Presidente y oidores de dicha Audiencia vistos en el consejo. Año 1541 a 1594 Estante 69, cajon 2, legajo 24. Carta de la Audiencia de Panama hace relacion de los daños y robos que hizo el corsario ingles en toda la costa del Perú, trata de la guerra contra los negros de Puerto velo y de otros asuntos de gobierno  
125 AGI Signatura Panama 237 L1111190 “...a sido fecha/ relacion que por vuestra horden sea fundado a media/ legua de la dicha ciudad y en los pastos y valí/ os Della un pueblo de los negros cimarrones de/ puerto velo y que por ser gente pobre y de calidad que con poca ocasion se podria/ levantar/ y tornar a lo que solian y seria necesario rele/varlos en quasi fuese posible...”  
126 AGI Signatura Panama 237 L1111189. A la audiencia de Tierra Firme que envie Relacion sobre que la ciudad del Nombre de Dios pide que un lugar que se a poblado media legua della en que viven los negros cimarrones de puerto belo sea aldea de la dicha ciudad
guaranteed the safety of the village. However, these soldiers were removed in 1581 to continue the war against Bayano (Mena García 1984).

In 1592, the Audiencia de Panama wrote that Santiago del Principe had 40 married African men as residents. These men were selling their labor as day workers in Nombre de Dios, while their women were selling chickens, hens, and vegetables in the Spanish town that they raised and cultivated in their village. In 1592, the Audiencia de Panama wrote to inform the Crown that there were two priests in Nombre de Dios that could indoctrinate the Africans of Santiago del Principe if they were moved to Nombre de Dios. If the towns were integrated, they would save royal funds used to pay a priest and a governor to oversee the new town. The following year the Crown authorized the merger of the towns and assigned the priest and the alcalde mayor of Nombre de Dios to oversee the pacified maroons. Apparently, this integration never took place, because in 1596 the Audiencia de Panama wrote again suggesting the unification of both towns.

In 1592, following the positive example of Santiago del Principe, the Bayano maroons were relocated to Villa Santa Cruz de la Real, approximately three leagues away from Panama City. Later in 1597, Nombre de Dios received the 'pacified' maroons from Santa Cruz de la Real that were apparently transferred to the Spanish town to serve in the construction of Portobelo and with other duties.

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127 ANP Archivo General de Indias, Est 69 caj2 leg24 Carta de la Audiencia de panama dirigida a su majestad con la que se remite testimonio del proceso seguido sobre la arribada al puerto del Nombre de Dios de la barca llamada San Francisco de Padua y expone otras cosas que conviene se hagan en aquella provincia, Panama 25 Junio 1592
129 Ibid.
130 ANP Tomo 1 Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Panama, 1573-1609. Est. 109 Caj 1 Leg 1
132 Ibid
Even though the large groups of maroons were pacified, in 1595 the Audiencia de Panama reported that enslaved Africans were still running away as a result of poor treatment and abuse from the Spanish. Due to the high cost of slavery by the end of the century, slaves were hardly punished for running away. Many Spanish opted to lie about the slave’s time away to avoid their punishment and/or execution.¹³⁴

The problems caused by maroons affected the population and commercial activities of the town. The population decreased when the maroon attacks started; however, the population grew when the attacks intensified. Perhaps the European population chose to deal with maroon conflicts in this passive way since the opportunity for financial gain outweighed their fear of being attacked.

Unfortunately, the records regarding the size of the enslaved population in Nombre de Dios during the sixteenth century have not been found. Only 26 white and African slaves were referenced in the documents analyzed, but this is clearly far from representative. Based on the data from the archives, the representation of African population in the town is underestimated. Figure 4.17 gives an idea of the composition of the population of Nombre de Dios. In the following section, I will discuss the governmental structure ruling the town and the existing conflicts.

¹³⁴ ANP Tomo 1 Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Panama, 1573-1609. Est. 109 Caj 1 Leg 1. 1595.
Figure 4.17: Composition of Nombre de Dios population in the sixteenth century.

4.3 Government of the Crown or of the Officials

In order to manage the American colonies, the Spanish Crown created a complex governmental structure. Mark Burkholder explains that the government was divided in four main groups (Burkholder 1986). The ruling structure of the colonies ranged from a central administration in Spain to local offices in America (Figure 4.18). The local government was composed of a cabildo [municipal council] and other lower positions. The cabildo ruled Spanish cities and their jurisdictions, usually large territories. The cabildo was mainly composed of regidores [aldermen] and alcaldes ordinarios [magistrates with executive and administrative duties]. Jay Kinsbruner suggests that the status of the town dictated the size of the cabildo. The cabildo ranged from two alcaides and twelve regidores for the most important cities to one alcalde and four regidores for towns and villages (Kinsbruner 2005). In many
cases, the alferez real [royal standard bearer], alguacil mayor [chief constable], fiel ejecutor [inspector of weights and measures], and procurador general o sindico [council's chief legal counsel] also composed the cabildo.

The formation of a cabildo was the first step after the foundation of a town. The conquistador initially appointed alcaldes, regidores and other officials. Thereafter, the regidores elected the alcaldes. The regidores’ term was two years, while the alcaldes served only one year. Later in the colonial period, the Spanish Crown sold many of these positions to Spanish men (Kinsbruner 2005). It has been suggested that many times the formation of a cabildo was the result of claiming territory. Governors of new provinces would often create a cabildo to comply with a
capitulación and then occupy the land with their people before somebody else claimed the territory (Perez Ramos 1975).

The cabildo was the local government in charge of markets, leasing stands and otherwise distributing spaces for public and private businesses. The cabildo also gave the licenses to accesorias [retail stores] and pulperias [grocery stores]. Municipal income was derived from fees paid for licenses, fines, rental of market stands, and taxes (Kinsbruner 2005). Although the cabildo was the local government, it was subordinate to an Audiencia [regional supreme court]. The Nombre de Dios Cabildo depended on the Audiencia de Panama.

Although the documents regarding the foundation and first Cabildo in Nombre de Dios are probably lost, the database of individuals and their occupations from Nombre de Dios in the sixteenth century gives an idea of the first years of the town (Figure 4.19). During the first decade, the local government of Nombre de Dios was composed of regidores and alcaldes ordinarios as well as other officials such as

![Figure 4.19: Officials and government positions in Nombre de Dios during the sixteenth century.](image)
Figure 4.19 (cont): Officials and government positions in Nombre de Dios.
escribanos [scribes], notarios [notaries], teniente de factor y veedor [inspector of weights and measures’ assistant], and teniente de governador [governor’s assistant]. Even though the port was meant to be an important commercial center, apparently the governmental structure was no different from a small town cabildo. The first details about regidores on the Nombre de Dios Cabildo are from 1538 when Francisco de Pradanos asked the Crown for the regidor position. Even though the regidores were supposed to be elected, there were many cases where the Crown appointed them. Later, in 1548, the cabildo reported that Nombre de Dios had 7 regidores but three of them were in Spain. By the 1540s the bureaucratic structure of the town was growing and diversifying. However, in 1562 the Crown suspension of four regidores and changed the election process. The Crown mandated that the town nominate 8 individuals each year for the regidor position. Then, the governor was to choose 4 from that group. The Cabildo’s response to this regulation was to suggest that the election of two regidores each year was enough because the Crown had previously appointed two officials that were also regidores.

The position of alcalde ordinario was one of the few positions that had a stable structure over the century. Between two and four individuals held this position every decade. This suggests that the positions were held for more than a year, unlike Kinsbruner’s suggestion, or that they were re-elected. Twenty-six individuals held this office in the sixteenth century.

The duties of scribes and notaries in Nombre de Dios diversified over time. Nine types of escribanias and two of notaries were identified:

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135 AGI Panama 235 L61\398. 1538.
136 AGI Panama 32 N5\2. 1548.
137 ANP Tomo III Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Panama, 1550-1579. Est. 69 Caj 2 Leg 39
There were 194 individuals that held official positions in the town. From this group 38 held escribanías, while only 7 served as notaries. Among the notaries, only two individuals held the Notario de Indias position. Apparently, escribanías differed only in regards to the place or people for whom the writing took place (e.g. at the cabildo, with the governor), and that the only position with a salary was the Escribano de Cabildo (Mena Garcia 1984). Scribes and notaries usually held more than one escribania and/or other public office at the same time. Only in one case a scribe was also a vendedor [inn-keeper].

The vendedor, a representative of the fiel ejecutor, supervised the markets, the quality of the products, and the price to avoid frauds made by overcharging or overweighing merchandise. The way to control this was creating lists of prices called aranceles. During the first years of Nombre de Dios there was only the title of Teniente de factor y vendedor [factor and vendedor assistant]. Between 1551 and 1570 both vendedor and Teniente were on duty in the town. After 1571, both disappeared.

During the second decade of Nombre de Dios’s existence, commercial activities probably increased because three more positions emerged: tesorero, contador, and receptor. The tesorero [treasurer] handled the Crown funds. The first

138 See example in Appendix 1 Document 5
tesorero in Nombre de Dios shows up in 1536 and the last appointment was in 1576. After that, the closest office to the treasurer was the Teniente de tesorero [treasurer’s assistant], which appeared in 1561 and lasted until the abandonment of the town. During the forty years of its existence nine individuals were treasurers. From this group, two individuals had other occupations as well. One of them was also alcalde mayor and capitan general at some point, and the other was also a pulpero [shopkeeper].

The contador [comptroller or accountant] oversaw collection and disbursement of the Crown’s treasure (Burkholder 1986). This position was permanent since the 1540s. Apparently, a variety of the contador was the contador de resultas or contador de cuentas, who oversaw the officials’ accounts. Only one individual held these titles in 1578. The contador was sometimes assisted by a teniente de contador, which was only a position filled twice in the history of the town, in 1553 and again in 1594. The second time, the individual was also receptor de alcabala [receiver of sales taxes].

The receptor was apparently a position appointed for special duties related to the collection of money, usually taxes. Four individuals were appointed receptores. Three were receptor de alcabala in 1537, 1593, and 1597, and the fourth one was receptor del dinero del muelle [recipient of the money for the pier]. Another position related to managing businesses was the factor who was responsible for selling confiscated goods, collecting taxes paid in public auctions, and handling any commercial transactions related to the treasury (Burkholder 1986). The position of factor was opened in Nombre de Dios from 1546 to 1580.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, the Crown altered the previous organization. The Crown changed from having two officials related to the treasury in
Nombre de Dios and two in Panama City, to three—contador, tesorero, and factor and veedor—in Panama City. These officials were required to travel a few times a year to Nombre de Dios. Although the contador was supposed to move to Panama City after 1575, records indicate that he lived in Nombre de Dios for the rest of the century.

Another position that emerged in the town was the alcalde mayor or corregidor who was a provincial administrator. According to Kinsbruner, the alcalde mayor did not have much influence in non-Indian towns (Kinsbruner 2005). However, Burkholder suggests that the alcalde mayor, together with the regidor and the governor, provided sustenance for non-encomenderos and expanded royal authority to the countryside (Burkholder 1986). Nineteen individuals were alcaldes mayores in Nombre de Dios. The first one was in 1544. This official position was somehow controversial among the officials of Nombre de Dios. In 1571, the Cabildo wrote that there was no alcalde mayor before Miguel Hurtado who held the office that year, and that there was no need for one. Apparently, the Crown had eliminated the position and the Cabildo, to further justify this idea, wrongly reported that only Hurtado had been alcalde mayor in Nombre de Dios. However, the records showed two alcaldes mayores before him, one in 1544 and the other in 1568. Furthermore, the Cabildo also suggested that the two alcaldes ordinarios were enough to oversee justice and businesses in town. Ironically, the same year of 1571, somebody wrote from the town to the Crown asking for an alcalde mayor to help solve problems with piracy and marronage, and to oversee the alcaldes ordinarios who were also merchants. Another example of conflicts between the Cabildo and

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139 ANP Tomo 1 Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Panama, 1573-1609. Est. 109 Caj. 1 Leg. 1. 1575.
140 AGI Panama 33 N871\12
141 AGI Panama II F359r – 375r Feb 20 1571.
the *alcalde mayor* was in 1588 when the *Cabildo* complained about the elections of officials and the *alcalde mayor's* ability to vote. The Crown replied by prohibiting the *alcalde mayor* from voting in the elections of the *Cabildo*.\textsuperscript{142}

Another position found in the town was the *alguacil mayor* or chief constable. This position was created in Nombre de Dios in 1578. The governor assigned the *alguacil mayor*. Later in the century, the governors managed to sell the position for four years (Mena Garcia 1984). Government positions were sold in public auctions at the end of the sixteenth century after Philip II authorized selling positions in order to restore the treasury and finance the war against England (Kinsbruner 2005). In Nombre de Dios, only three individuals held the office of *alguacil mayor*. This could be explained by the length of occupancy since the title was granted in 1578, 1585, and 1591.

During the second half of the century many other occupations were created for short periods and with specific duties (Table 4.8). Although the number of officials and positions seem enough for such a small town, there were still a number of times when the *Cabildo* complained that there were not enough officials or the need for others like the *oidor*. An *oidor* was a judge or magistrate that listened and sentenced those involved in lawsuits. In 1572, the *Cabildo* wrote that there were no officials in the town.\textsuperscript{143} However, the decade of the 1570s is one of the periods where there were more officials in place. Finally, in 1571, the *Cabildo* wrote twice asking for an *oidor* to be in the town at least while the fleet was in port probably to resolve disputes among merchants.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{142} AGI Panama 32 N20\1\1, 1588.
\textsuperscript{143} AGI Panama 11 F113r-115v. Carta de Pedro de Ortega 5-9-1572
\textsuperscript{144} AGI Panama 33 N87\1\2. 1571.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oficial de la contaduría [Accounting officer]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veedor of the casa de contratación</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juez de bienes de difuntos [Judge of deceased people possessions]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juez de comision de difuntos [Judge of the deceased people commission]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corredor de lonja [Exchange manager]</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1560 and 1573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depositario general [General Trustee]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardamayor of the Casa de contratación</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurador general [Attorney general]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurador [Attorney]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurador [Attorney] and mayordomo [Manager]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1561 to 1596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayordomo de la iglesia para sepultar [Manager of the church for burials]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayordomo del santisimo sacrament [Manager of the holy sacrament]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alférez mayor [Standard bearer]</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1593, 1594, 1598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teniente de oficial real [Assistant of royal officer]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1560 to 1563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregonero [Town crier]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1575, 1578, 1583, 1589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitán [Captain]</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1553 to 1596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitán general [General captain] usually combined with alcalde mayor</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1553 to 1588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitán del puerto [Captain of the port]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almirante [Admiral]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medidor de lotes [Plot measurer]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flamenco y bombardero [Soldier and gunner]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1553</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8: Short term official positions in Nombre de Dios.

The abundance of official positions allowed many inhabitants to hold more than one office during their lives. Mena García argues that the perpetual character of the regimiento meant that few controlled the cabildo and others managed to rotate. Thus, government positions were in the same circle for many years (Mena Garcia 1984). As mentioned earlier in the chapter, many arrivals to the colonies came as a result of family ties. Apparently, in 1570 these relations caused conflict among the population of Nombre de Dios “...in this city of Nombre de Dios an alcalde mayor that is the first cousin of the president [of the Audiencia de Panama]... and the alguacil mayor is the nephew of Doctor Barros, oidor of the Real Audiencia [de
Although the claim of a small circle of individuals rotating between government offices seems justified, the population analyzed showed that the vast majority of individuals held only one office during their lifetime, while only 10 individuals (5%) held more than 4. Also, the double residency of Nombre de Dios' inhabitants, as well as the continual fluctuation of population, affected the number of offices held by the same individuals (Figure 4.20 and Table 4.9). The complaint regarding the same people holding offices was perhaps the result of six individuals that held more than two positions the previous decade (1560s). In any case, the individuals that usually held more than 3 positions had occupations related to escribanías and notaries. Only in one case, in the 1530s, the individual had influential positions. Clemente de Campo was encomendero and also alcalde, notario, escribano publico, regidor, and medidor de lotes. Campo was a founder of Nombre de Dios which explains his privilege position in the town and his eligibility for different positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Positions</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.20 and Table 4.9: Number of official positions held by individuals in Nombre de Dios.

AGI Panama 33 N87\1\1
The constant appearance and disappearance of positions as well as the creation of short-term offices reflect the increasing needs of the town and the ever-changing situations that the port faced. The abundance of offices probably caused confusion among the incoming fleets and travelers from Panama City. However, the continual change in tax regulations was probably more shocking for the visitors. The Crown frequently authorized the introduction of taxes to maintain the town, improve infrastructure, and maintain the Camino Real. At the founding of the colony, the Indies were exempt from any type of taxes and duties. This measure was aimed at increasing and facilitating trade in America (Kinsbruner 2005). However, taxes soon appeared. Four different types of taxes were in place at different periods: diezmo, sisa, almojarifazgo, and alcabala.

The diezmo [tithe] was a ‘voluntary’ tax that was ten percent of agricultural production. This ‘tithe’ was usually intended to support the Church (Canga Arquelles 1833). The only reference to this tax is from 1537 from Bishop Tomas de Berlanga. The Bishop complained because the diezmos were paid with chickens and vegetables, and few people paid it because most of the inhabitants were merchants. Thus, the Bishop explained that there were no funds to pay a priest and the way to solve this problem was to make the diezmos based on land and charge them every year.146 Apparently, this proposal was not approved because it was not mentioned again. The problem with this tax is that it was based on an agricultural economy but agriculture was not a principal activity in Nombre de Dios; thus, there were few people to tax.

The sisa consisted of excise taxes on items imported or exported from the town (Kinsbruner 2005). The sisa was apparently a temporary tax in Nombre de Dios with a specific purpose. The first reference is in 1536, when a tax was established on

146 AGI Panama 235 L6:1348
wine and flour brought from Spain, and on mules used in the transportation of merchandise. The purpose of this tax was to repair the Camino. The second and third sisas found were established in 1547 and 1549. The purpose was to fix the Camino again. These taxes were also on wine and flour then on sales of enslaved Africans as well. The last sisa found was in 1557 also on wine, flour, and slaves but this time with the purpose of funding the fight against maroons. For some unknown reason, there are no more records of sisas charged in the port for the rest of the century. Perhaps the sisa was not needed after the establishment of the almojarifazgo and the alcabala.

The almojarifazgo was a customs tax on the importation or exportation of merchandise from Spain or other colonies. The almojarifazgo was established in 1543 and consisted of a 5% tax on the appraised value of the merchandise arriving at the port. This was problematic because the tax increased according to the movement of the merchandise. On two occasions the Nombre de Dios Cabildo asked for exemptions from the almojarifazgo on certain products. In 1557, the Cabildo asked for exemption of taxes on products from the Barlovento [Windward] Islands. These islands were supplying the port with basic products and were reducing their trips because of the high taxes and low profit. In 1576, the Cabildo asked again for an exemption when Peru was supplying the town with flour.

\[147\text{ Justicia 365. Sobre sisas en la ciudad de Nombre de Dios (ff. 2044-2068v). In Jopling 1994: 224. 1536.}

\[148\text{ AGI Panama 235 L8\1\1314. 1547. AGI Signatura\AGI\Panama 235 L8\1\488. 1549.}

\[149\text{ ANP Cartas y expedientes de los cabildos de Nombre de Dios Portobelo y Veragua. Estante 69 cajon 2 legajo 1. 1557 Petición que hace el Concejo de Nombre de Dios pidiendo mercedes al Rey para el sostenimiento de la población}

\[150\text{ ANP Cartas y expedientes de los cabildos de Nombre de Dios Portobelo y Veragua. Estante 69 cajon 2 legajo 1. 1557 Petición que hace el Concejo de Nombre de Dios pidiendo mercedes al Rey para el sostenimiento de la población}

\[151\text{ AGI Panama 1 N41\1\11}
Finally, the *alcabala* was a 10% sales tax on merchandise, slaves, and land (Canga Arquelles 1833). This tax was apparently imposed in the 1590s because the Nombre de Dios *Cabildo* wrote asking for an exemption on the *alcabala* so they could rebuild the town in 1596 after Drake's attack and a fire.\(^{152}\)

The imposition of taxes on imported and exported merchandise created conflicts at three different levels: first, between merchants and municipal officials; second, between municipal officials and regional officials; and third, between municipal officials and fleets. The first concern of the Crown and officials from other ports regarding the government in Nombre de Dios was the composition of the *Cabildo*. Between 1536 and 1571, there were constant complaints about the corruption of the officials who defrauded the Royal Treasury.\(^{153}\) The officials apparently received bribes and introduced supplies, or limited the entrance of merchandise (Mena Garcia 1984). The solution proposed by the Crown was to stop the officials from carrying any commercial activities related to trading,\(^{154}\) and to appraise the merchandise arriving at the port with at least two officials present.\(^{155}\) Although the Crown tried to solve the corruption problem in the port, the situation worsened when the *contador*, *tesorero*, and *veedor* and *factor* were transferred to Panama City in 1575\(^{156}\).

On two occasions, there were reports of conflicts caused by the governor. First, in 1536, the *Cabildo* filed a complaint stating that the officials did everything to please the governor instead of the Crown. Second, in 1563, two merchants from

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\(^{152}\) AGI Panama 32 N22\|15-6. 1597. AGI Panama 32 N22\|13 La ciudad del Nombre de Dios dize don Diego Suarez de Amaya alcalde mayor del Nombre de Dios sobre que se provea hacer edificio de la ciudad y vecinos della en que pide. 1597.

\(^{153}\) AGI Panama 235 L6\|148. 1536. AGI Panama 1 N1\|1. 1571.

\(^{154}\) AGI Panama 235 L6\|198. 1536.

\(^{155}\) AGI Panama 235 L6\|234. 1550.

\(^{156}\) AGI Panama 1 N3\|11
Nombre de Dios complained because governor Don Rafael de Figueroa took two slaves and a cargo of soap from them. When one of them complained, the governor put him in jail.\(^{157}\) Finally, the lack of communication between the *Audiencia* and the municipal officials resulted in the failure to announce changes in regulations made by the Crown. The *Cabildo* complained to the Crown because the letters were sent to the governor, who was in Panama City so that on many occasions the orders did not reach the port.\(^{158}\)

Conflicts between the municipal officials and fleet officials were constant over the century. Two main issues affected the relations between them: authority and illegal imports. Between 1548 and 1580s, there were reports of arguments with the fleets that continually questioned the authority of the port officials. According to the fleets’ officials they were under the Crown’s authority, while the port officials were only under the regional authority.\(^{159}\) The situation worsened when the fleets did not satisfy the registries, opposed the arrest of members of the fleet,\(^ {160}\) and built barracks used for illegal trade.\(^ {161}\)

\(^{157}\) Justicia 349. Marcos Caballero y Hernan Perez de Medina, vecinos de la ciudad del Nombre de Dios con don Rafael Figuerola Gobernador que fue de Tierra Firme. Sobre dos esclavos que el dicho gobernador les tomó de los que traían para su servicio. In Jopling 1994: 417

\(^{158}\) AGI Panama 32 N41/1. 1548

\(^{159}\) AGI Panama 32 N41/1. 1548. ANP No 80 Archivo General de Indias, Simancas Secular, Audiencia de Panama, Cartas y expedientes del Presidente y oydores de dicha Audiencia vistos en el Consejo. Años 1545 a 1584. Est 69 Caj2 Leg24. Carta del Licenciado Carasa Fiscal de la Audiencia de Panamá da cuenta de la llegada del Presidente Vera, de los corsarios franceses, de cosas de la real hacienda y de los oficios de justicia que provee la Audiencia. Panama 26 Junio 1569

\(^{160}\) ANP Archivo general de Indias, Simancas secular, Audiencia de Panama, Año 1541 a 1584 Est 60 caj 2 Leg 23

\(^{161}\) ANP Tomo 1 Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Panama, 1573-1609. Est. 109 Caj 1 Leg 1
4.4 The town is alive: commerce and piracy

The heart and reason for the existence of Nombre de Dios was the commercial activities taking place in the port. Even though the town was always described as poor and inhospitable, it must have had a good infrastructure in place to host an event such as the arrival of the Spanish fleet and the merchants from the South Sea. The encounter of hundreds of merchants and the arrival of tons of merchandise for the colonies and Spain required a strong infrastructure. Such infrastructure had to consist, at least, of transportation means for the merchandise and people, spaces to keep the merchandise and treasure, and a degree of permanence that would guarantee the continuation of commercial activities in the future.

The ability to transport merchandise between the Caribbean and Pacific Coasts was the main reason for the existence of the town. Thus, great effort was put towards the maintenance of the roads, boats, and mule trains. For example, in 1533, the Crown ordered the construction of a boat to cross the Chagres River because people and animals had drowned in it.162 The construction of a boat was not an easy task since it involved the importation of materials, such as nails, from Spain. In addition, the Camino was continually in maintenance, as previously described. Sisas were in place at several times for this purpose.

The safety of the merchandise was another important aspect to consider in the town because of bad weather, thieves, and pirates. This factor –exposure and insecurity– was a negative feature of the town. First, in 1540, the Cabildo complained that there was no arca de tres llaves [official treasure chest] so the bullism, coins, and other valuable goods were not safe and were to remain in Panama

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162 AGI Panama 234 L5\1\252. 1533
City until the fleet arrived\textsuperscript{163}. The \textit{arca de tres llaves} was required of all towns after 1500, and served to store important legal documents and treasures. The special feature of the chest was the existence of a lock with at least three keys that were kept by different officials, such as a \textit{regidor}, an \textit{escribano}, and a judge. All had to be present to open the chest.

In addition to the lack of a safety deposit box, the buildings in the town and the space in the plaza were apparently not large enough to unload and store merchandise. We know this because the fleets often built barracks on the beach. In 1597, the \textit{Cabildo} asked to build a \textit{lonja} [exchange house] where the merchants could unload, and the merchandise would be safe from rain and thieves\textsuperscript{164}. This had apparently already taken place because the \textit{Audiencia de Panama} described in 1590s that there were \textit{lonjas} in the town\textsuperscript{165}.

Finally, a positive feature that Nombre de Dios had was the dynamic of the trading. Since the arrival of the fleets was relatively regular, the merchants from Spain and the southern colonies would exchange the merchandise, partly on credit. The period between payments was from one fleet arrival to the next\textsuperscript{166}. This credit-driven dynamic guaranteed large numbers of people arriving in the town with the fleets to conduct more business or to collect the rest of a debt.

\textsuperscript{163} AGI Panama 235 L7\1386. 1540.
\textsuperscript{164} AGI Panama 32N2\16. 1597
\textsuperscript{165} AGI Panama 1 N673\1
\textsuperscript{166} AGI Panama 11 F240r-244v. 1574. Carta de Diego Calderon, Pedro de Ortega, Diego del Castillo. 1574.
The Fleet Business

The arrival of the fleets in America triggered a long sequence of activities for officials and merchants. The General of the Spanish fleet sent the news of the fleet's arrival in Cartagena to Nombre de Dios (by small packet boat) and Panama City (overland), and then to Peru (again by packet boat). In a period of two weeks, Crown revenues were transported to Panama from the southern colonies. Mena Garcia suggests that between 1555 and 1557, 42 frigates, 38 ships, and 2 caravels entered Nombre de Dios from Cartagena, and that sometimes the merchandise movement in Nombre de Dios exceeded the imports to Veracruz, port of call of New Spain (Mena Garcia 1984).

The large volume of merchandise was hard to control. Some merchandise was lost during the transatlantic trip. When a ship was sinking, sailors and passengers tried to save as much merchandise as possible. Many times this situation uncovered illegal activities such as smuggling. For example, in 1581 the ship Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria was sinking and a lot of the merchandise recovered was discovered never to have been registered in Seville. Another way of smuggling was described by Lieutenant Avila in 1553 who wrote: "...after the ships enter the port of this city they take the registries of the ships and open and include the merchandise and other things that such ships bring without reporting them to the justice of this kingdom as they are obligated and according to how Your Highness demands in the royal decrees...". Another way of smuggling was described by Lieutenant Avila in 1553 who wrote: "...after the ships enter the port of this city they take the registries of the ships and open and include the merchandise and other things that such ships bring without reporting them to the justice of this kingdom as they are obligated and according to how Your Highness demands in the royal decrees...". The fleet corruption was not limited to sailors but also to high officers such as the captain and admiral.

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167 AGI Patronato 257 N1 G5 R4\2\5. 1581.
168 AGI Panama 33 N33\2\1. 1554. Auto que hizo ____ de avyla teniente en la ciudad del Nombre de Dios del Reino de tierra firme a los oficiales reales que en el residen "...luego como entran los navios..."
The officials not only altered the registries but also introduced illegal merchandise by mixing it with registered merchandise. The barracks on the beach were also an instrument for smuggling. Sailors unloaded and sold merchandise before the port officials had made the valuation. Apparently, the smuggling of merchandise increased in the 1570s and 1580s because there are several reports of the introduction of gold, silver, and slaves. The illegal activities of the fleet contributed to the problems of the town. However, the introduction of merchandise, legally or illegally, maintained the port's position in the trading system. Although the fleet introduced many goods, the subsistence of the town per se greatly depended on regional trade.

**Regional Networks and Subsistence**

The merchandise from the fleet was diverse, ranging from wine, oil, flour, capers, and olives to silk, clothing, wax, and soap. However, the great majority of goods continued to other colonies, and local resources or regional trade fulfilled the basic needs of the town. Overall the agricultural production in the Province of Panama was quite deficient and from very early in the sixteenth century, Nombre de Dios depended on imports from Cartagena, Tolu, and The Windward Islands instead.

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169 ANP Tomo 1 Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Panama, 1573-1609. Est. 109 Caj 1 Leg 1. 1580.
170 Ibid.
171 ANP Tomo 1 Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Panama, 1573-1609. Est. 109 Caj 1 Leg 1. 1574.
of Panama City (Mena Garcia 1984). As a rule, maritime transport was more beneficial and cheaper than by land.

There is evidence of cattle raising in and around Nombre de Dios but only during the first half of the century. Hernando Ribero wrote in 1540 to the Crown asking for exclusive rights to the asiento [contract] to raise cattle. However, cattle raising disappeared by 1557 when the Cabildo complained about the region’s inability to support cattle or farming. Apparently, at the end of the century Nata and Villa de los Santos, in the interior of Panama, supplied Nombre de Dios with cattle.

Most other goods came from the Caribbean. During the first half of the century, Santo Domingo and the Antilles supplied the port with sugar and meat. When production in the Antilles deteriorated, they were replaced by Cartagena (Figure 4.21). The supplies increased when products such as chicken, corn, and pork were added. Mules, wax, and clay pots were imported from Nicaragua and Honduras (Appendix 1, document 5).

Apparently, the town completely depended on regional imports. In 1561, the Cabildo complained because the visitador [inspector] of Cartagena delayed the supply of corn, chicken, cassava bread, pork and other products from Cartagena and Tolu because of conflicts with some inhabitants from Nombre de Dios. The following year the Crown ordered the transportation of supplies. Even though the dependence on imports was evident and the trade was fragile, the dependency it

172 AGI Panama 235 L 7\1\284
173 ANP Cartas y expedientes de los cabildos de Nombre de Dios Portobelo y Veragua. Estante 69 cajon 2 legajo 1. 1557. Petición que hace el Concejo de Nombre de Dios pidiendo mercedes al Rey para el sostenimiento de la población.
174 AGI Panama 1 N 67\3\1. 1592.
175 AGI Patronato 193 R 38\1\1. 1561.
176 AGI Signatura\AGI\Panama 236 L 9\1\739. 1561.
Figure 4.21: Map showing the regional network that supplied Nombre de Dios.

seems increased over time. By 1575, the port was almost entirely supplied by Cartagena, Tolú, Rio de Hacha, and Cabo de la Vela with corn, cattle, pigs, goats, and rams. At the end of the century, the town was also supplied by Jamaica, still a Spanish colony at this time. In 1595, a ship from Jamaica arrived with supplies of salted meat.

The maritime supply of regional products from Caribbean colonies was affected by piracy, frequently interrupting importations from Tolú and Cartagena as

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177 ANP Archivo General de Indias Sevilla, Audiencia de Panama, Cartas y expedientes de los Cabildos seculares de Nombre de Dios, Portobelo, y Veracruz. Años 1541 a 1688. Estante 69 cajon 2 legajo 1
early as the 1530s. Fortunately, the development of Natá and Los Santos relieved the port and the needs of the inhabitants were fulfilled. Additionally, Nombre de Dios counted with a stretch relationship with Pacific colonies such as Peru and Ecuador that supplied goods such as flour, raisins, and cheese. Another relationship, though not clear, is with Mexico. According to an appraisal guide from the Audiencia de Panama in 1565, there were many products—such as shoes, cloths, and rosaries—coming to Panama from Mexico. However, Mexican products are not referred in any other documents analyzed.

**Going for the Treasure**

Nombre de Dios was known for treasures arriving from the rich southern colonies. Although this was beneficial for the maintenance of the town, it was also harmful because it awakened the interest of foreigners in search of treasures. Piracy, together with marronage, were the biggest threats to the survival of the town. The attacks on ports were more likely to happen during periods of wars between the Spanish, English, and French. However, since 1537, the port continually lived under the threat of attacks upon the city or in arriving ships.\(^\text{179}\)

In the sixteenth century, the two big threats to the port were French and English corsairs. The pirates' activities intensified during the Anglo-Spanish war (1585-1604) and the Spanish-French wars (Table 4.10). Although the threat from French pirates was continual, they were not as successful as the English who managed to take over the town twice in the sixteenth century.

\(^{179}\) AGI Patronato 194 R39\(3\)\(3\)\(2\). 1537.
Even though it was common knowledge that the port was continually at risk, few steps were taken by the Crown and the inhabitants to defend the city. The absence of a fort and artillery obviously did not contribute to the defense of the town; thus, the first response of the Audiencia de Panama was to keep merchandise in Panama City until the fleet arrived. In 1568, alcalde mayor Captain Juan de Umana testified that to defend the port from invaders Nombre de Dios’s residents had arms, and they had built some *bohios* [thatch-roofed huts] in the forest for the elders, women, and children. If the town was attacked, they could also take the merchandise to the *bohios*.

When Francis Drake attacked the port in 1572 he described some of the defense strategies of the people in the town:

Table 4.10: Piracy threats and attacks to Nombre de Dios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>French Piracy</th>
<th>English Piracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1537</td>
<td>Threats to the coast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1553</td>
<td>Threat to the town</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1566</td>
<td>Captain Molu threatens the Coast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1568</td>
<td>Pirates in Veragua</td>
<td>Pirates in Cartagena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1569-71</td>
<td>French threats</td>
<td>English threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1569</td>
<td>French took over Tolú</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1572</td>
<td>French threats (August)</td>
<td>Drake attacked the town (January)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1573</td>
<td>French threats</td>
<td>English threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1575</td>
<td>French threats</td>
<td>Drake’s threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1594</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hawkins attacked Panama City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1596</td>
<td></td>
<td>Drake attacked the town</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[^180\] AGI Panama 29 RS N14/1/1. 1552.
\[^181\] AGI Patronato 267 N1 R46/1/1
...[There was] only one gunner on the fort, with six brass guns on carriages, and some whole and demi-culverines, which they dismounted. The gunner fled and alarmed the town...as the English perceived by the cries of the people, the ringing of the great bell, and drums beating up and down the town...They hung lines with matches lighted across the end of the market-place, as if they had been a company of musketeers, whereas they were only two or three that made the lines move and dance, who all flew when they perceived themselves discovered...yet before they got out of the harbour, the towns men remounted one of their great guns, and fired at them, but without damage...” (Wright 1932: 10-14).

After Drake’s attack, the need for soldiers was evident. The Cabildo wrote to the Crown that if soldiers were not sent to Nombre de Dios the town would be empty when the fleet left because people were afraid of attacks.\(^{182}\) Apparently this request was granted, because at the end of the century the inhabitants of the town were feeding and accommodating soldiers in their houses. The other defense mechanism adopted after Drake’s attack was the search for pirates and the surveillance of the coast with galleys.\(^ {183}\) Despite all the efforts, the port was attacked again in 1596 by Drake.\(^ {184}\) This attack further justified the transfer of the port to Portobelo the following year.

\(^{182}\) ANP Archivo General de Indias, Seccion 25 No 20 Carta de la Audiencia de Panama acusa recibo de la cedula sobre limites de aquella audiencia y la de Guatemala, dice no existen historias ni escrituras sobre el descubrimiento de aquel reino, y da cuenta de varios hechos de los corsarios ingleses y franceses y de varias casas de gobierno. 1574.

\(^ {183}\) ANP Cartas y expedientes de los cabildos de Nombre de Dios, Portobelo y Veracruz Est 69, caj2 leg1. 1575.

\(^ {184}\) AGI Panama 32N22\1\10 Informacion de la ciudad del Nombre de Dios
4.5 Portobeló: the promise of a beautiful port

The abandonment of Nombre de Dios was not a sudden event. Since the middle of the century there were already proposals to move the port to another location. Juan García de Hermosilla led the proposal to move the port to Puerto Caballos, Honduras, arguing that the Panamanian coast was dangerous for the health of the travelers and merchants. However, no action was taken by the Crown to move the port until 1587, when Baptista Antonelli and Juan de Tejeda traveled around the colonies deciding which ones needed fortifications. They reported that Nombre de Dios was a blind port with a lot of inconveniences and it could not be properly fortified.\(^{185}\) It was called a blind port because the open bay and lack of watchtowers did not allow them to anticipate enemy ships arriving to the port, as in other colonies such as Cartagena and Veracruz. The other problem they highlighted was the ill environment of the place. Since Portobelo was only 5 leagues away [15 miles], one solution was to consider Honduras, which was arguably healthier, but would require a new Pacific port, as well. Panama City would have to be replaced. Documents from the period describing the decision-making process for the location of the port of call shed light on the criteria used by the Spanish to decide the best location for a port of call (Table 4.11). Even though these documents are very useful, it is necessary to be aware of the authors' motives, since it is evident that they are discrediting one place to favor another. The information available is from three documents, one written by Baptista Antonelli,\(^{186}\) another by Governor Hermosilla, and the last one by the Audiencia de Panama.\(^{187}\) Antonelli's analyses of the different locations for the port

\(^{185}\) AGI Panama 1 N67\1\1, 1587
\(^{186}\) AGI Panama 1 N67\1\1
\(^{187}\) AGI Panama 1 N67\3\1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Caballos</td>
<td>Written by the governor of Honduras</td>
<td>Written by Baptista Antonelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Same length from Spain as to Nombre de Dios but shorter trip to Spain</td>
<td>• The port is not wide and deep enough for ships over 300 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The port is clean and big</td>
<td>• The entrance could be blocked easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The bay has a mouth and a canal where many ships can stay</td>
<td>• The land is dark, foggy and with hurricanes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The land is healthy and fertile to maintain fleets</td>
<td>• There are not enough towns between the two coasts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There is enough wood to repair ships</td>
<td>• The road connecting the ports is too difficult and with dangerous rivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are many mules for transportation</td>
<td>• Two forts would need to be built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are many gold and silver mines</td>
<td>• The two ports are too far from each other and there is not enough grass to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The port of Fonseca would be the Pacific terminus of the transatlantic</td>
<td>feed the mules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>route. Fonseca is one of the best ports on that coast.</td>
<td>• It will need many enslaved Africans because there are no Indians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Tierra Firme would be abandoned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nombre de Dios</td>
<td>Written by the Audiencia de Panama:</td>
<td>Written by the Audiencia de Panama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are many lonjas and houses to accommodate the travelers and</td>
<td>• During rainy seasons the town floods and people get sick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>merchandise</td>
<td>• There are only 25 vecinos and they are poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The town has been healthy and cultivable in the last 25 years</td>
<td>• They cannot raise cattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are many inhabitants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portobelo</td>
<td>Written by the Audiencia de Panama:</td>
<td>Written by Hermosilla:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• It is 5 leagues closer to the Chagres River</td>
<td>• It is too close to Nombre de Dios and it will have the same ill environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• It has an island in the middle where a fort can defend the bay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The mouth is wide and deep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There is a part where people and merchandise can be unloaded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The bay can hold more than 300 ships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are no winds nor hurricanes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are two waterfalls to supply water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11: Advantages and disadvantages of the possible locations for the port of call.
were apparently neutral. In contrast, Hermosilla’s description favored the relocation of the port to Honduras by contrasting Nombre de Dios and Puerto Caballos. On the contrary, the document from the Audiencia de Panama obviously favors the Panamanian ports.

After the Crown decided that Portobelo was the new location for the port, the abandonment of Nombre de Dios did not take place until the new ports fortifications were built. After this, the vecinos from Nombre de Dios had to move and build their own houses in a period of two months. However, the President of the Audiencia de Panama wrote in 1596 that merchants who owned ships plying the Chagres River were the only inhabitants of the town and they did not have enough means to build their houses in Portobelo.\(^{188}\) Although the agreement was to abandon the town after Portobelo was ready, Drake’s attack led the Audiencia de Panama to accelerate the transfer\(^{189}\) because Nombre de Dios was burned after the attack. However, the inhabitants of the port did not support the decision of the Audiencia.

The Audiencia’s was based on the cost of reconstructing a town that was soon to be abandoned. However, the condition for the move was that the vecinos had to build permanent houses, complete with roof tiles, within a period of two weeks of acquiring a lot. If the houses were built with thatch, they would be destroyed, the owners would be fined 500 pesos, and they would lose the lot. The inhabitants of Nombre de Dios opposed these measures. They argued that Portobelo was not clear of vegetation and they did not have the materials in the place yet. Additionally, the rainy season was very close as well as the arrival of the fleet. They described Nombre de Dios as a site clear of vegetation, with abundant fruits in the woods to

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\(^{188}\) AGI Panama 32 N22\,1\,41 Consideraciones de Don Alonso de Sotomayor Vuestro Presidente de la Real Audiencia de Panama para el traslado de Nombre de Dios a San Felipe de Puertobelo

\(^{189}\) AGI Panama 32N22\,1\,15. 1596.
feed the Africans, and with plenty of products cultivated by the free people of color in Santiago del Principe. Also, the inhabitants could use materials spared from the fire to rebuild their houses in Nombre de Dios. In addition, the Camino was in good shape for transporting merchandise from the fleet arriving that year, while the one from Portobelo was in very bad shape (Mena García 1992).

Although the vecinos opposition to the transfer did not convince Antonelli nor the Audiencia, they had to agree when the Crown confirmed the arrival of a fleet that year. They had to accept postponement of the move. The main reason behind their acceptance was to avoid the fleet staying in Cartagena and leaving the merchandise there if they knew Portobelo was not ready. The town was finally moved in 1597 when the Camino Real to Portobelo was finished (Figure 4.22). Even though Antonelli ordered the Camino to Nombre de Dios dismantled, and the Audiencia de

![Figure 4.22: Portobelo bay map by Nicolas Bellin from 1764.](http://www.provincia.fc.it/cultura/antonelli/ImmaginiAntonelli/ImmaginiBig/America/Panama/Gasp58_ESP.html)
Panama confirmed the order,\textsuperscript{190} the complete destruction of the Camino never took place as it can be observed in the archaeological remains of the town explained in the next chapter.

4.6 \textit{Summary}

The purpose of this chapter was to explain some of the dynamics that characterized the port of Nombre de Dios. The history of the town is full of desolation and conflict. The first sign of the disinterest of the people living in the port was the indifference in the construction and maintenance of structures that were vital for the development of a bonafide city port. The continual complaints to the Crown to solve problems show a dependency on imperial decisions. However, for the Crown, Nombre de Dios was only one more urban settlement in the vast territory of America. The limited action on the part of the inhabitants themselves led to the fragility of the town. In addition, the unique geographical, demographic, and administrative conditions of the town further contributed to its stagnation and underdevelopment.

Troubles with the landscape and extremely wet, tropical environment were major handicaps for the development of the port. In addition, the lack of construction materials, specifically stone, further contributed to the delay of urban development. The initial construction of buildings was probably undertaken by the Spaniards themselves since there was no significant native population in the area. Some environmental problems would most likely have been solved through proper planning.

\textsuperscript{190} ANPArchivo General de Indias Audiencia de Panama, Cartas y expedientes del Presidente y oidores de la Audiencia, años 1541 a 1710, estante 69, cajon 2, legajo 26
and knowledge about urban engineering, but these were skills the first settlers of the town probably lacked.

The absence of a diversely skilled population was one factor that retarded Nombre de Dios's development. First, the predominance of a merchant class and government officials led the port to specialize entirely in commercial activities, leaving aside subsistence activities and craftsmanship, and creating a dependency on importation of goods. Second, the absence of a native population that could contribute to the sustenance of the town slowed its economic development because it was less appealing to high-class Spaniards hoping to hold encomiendas. Finally, the constant flux of people engendered instability, preventing formation of a strong sense of community and mutual collaboration. The population living in Nombre de Dios was attracted by the possibility of wealth based on developing trading networks and taking advantage of the confusion and indifference of government regulations. Community cohesion was not fostered by these conditions.

Although the population of the town was mostly Spanish, Africans slowly came to occupy a place in town society. Free Africans became residents who not only contributed to the development and maintenance of the fort, but possibly modified some aspects of the Iberian culture. The absence of natives led to a relatively high rate of sexual relations between Spanish and Africans, and the mulatto population slowly increased at the end of the sixteenth century. It is difficult to know to what degree mestizaje took place, but the strong African presence, the pacification of maroons, and their integration into settled society certainly influenced the frequency of these interethnic relations.

The life of this unusual port town was characterized by continual conflicts among the population, government officials, fleet officials, maroons, and pirates.
These conflicts greatly affected Nombre de Dios and the structures in place. The administrative structure constantly needed modifications as a result of the instability of the population and the corruption of government officials. Also, the irregular changes to taxes and regulations facilitated evasion and contraband trading that, in the end, diminished the funds of the Crown and the funds available to solve problems in the town. Finally, maroon and pirate threats deeply impacted the history of the town. The lack of defense and constant flow of valuables led to attacks, made worse by the town's poor situation and small permanent population.

Even though the port of Nombre de Dios was full of inconveniences, its population increased dramatically during the period when the town was facing the worst circumstances of its history. Perhaps, thirst for wealth was more powerful than danger. Despite the many obstacles limiting its development, Nombre de Dios's special role in the Spanish trade system kept it alive throughout the sixteenth century.

The history of Nombre de Dios and the problems it faced is sometimes confusing if one relies only on documents. The contradictory statements about the urban development of the site and its population, as well as the living conditions of the Spaniards call into question the intentions and the reliability of the authors. An archaeological study of Nombre de Dios helps to explain the puzzling history of the town. In the following chapter, I will describe the results of a season of archaeological research in Nombre de Dios.

191 See Appendix 1 Table 1 for a summary of events in the history of the town.
Chapter V: 
Archaeological Studies at Nombre de Dios

The archaeological project at Nombre de Dios resulted from a site visit in May 2004 where the potential for archaeological research was evaluated. During this initial visit, hundreds of ceramic and metal fragments and a stone structure were found. This quick and superficial evaluation of the site led to a field season proposal to evaluate the integrity of the site and search for evidence of cultural contact relations in the sixteenth century town.

The field season took place between January and March 2007. During seven weeks, a group of archaeologists, students, and workers participated in field and lab research. The field season consisted of surveying the archaeological site, mapping features, processing artifacts, and developing a community engagement program. The harsh winter preceding January 2007 uncovered a larger stretch of the stone structure found in 2004. The characteristics of the structure suggested it was a fragment of the Camino Real [Royal Path] that connected Nombre de Dios with Panama City in the sixteenth century (Figure 5.1).

The discovery of the Camino Real defined the area of study for the 2007 field season for two reasons, first, the location of the stone paved Camino Real marked the entrance to the colonial town, which meant the fragment could be located near the houses to the east of the plaza or it could be the southern limit of the main plaza of
the colonial town. Either way, it would help us to understand the layout of the town. And second, between 2004 and 2007, looting activities had increased in the town causing loss of precious archaeological evidence and political conflict between the owners of the land, inhabitants of the town, and local authorities (Figure 5.2). Working in the area surrounding the Camino Real provided many advantages for the study of the archaeological site. Our presence would protect the site, at least while we were in the town, as well as recognize the importance of the archaeological site and its potential to be included in tourism programs that would help the economy of the town. In addition, the Camino Real is a landmark that can be used as a reference point to determine the location of the main plaza and administrative buildings, and help set eastern and southern limits of the town. The northern and western boundaries are marked by natural limits with the coastal line to the north and the Nombre de Dios River to the west.
In the following sections, I will describe the methodology used during the fieldwork, and the archaeological evidence recovered. The features and artifacts will be presented in three parts organized in the following categories: construction materials and techniques, artifacts for domestic and personal use, and artifacts for commercial and military activities.

5.1 Methodology

The absence of any previous systematic research in Nombre de Dios limited the archaeological methods appropriated for the site during the first field season. When the archaeological team arrived at Nombre de Dios in 2007, the groundskeeper from the lot to the west of the modern road had ‘cleaned’ the superficial remains in the lot. The lost of the superficial evidence in this area plus the looting activities led to the need to dig small units in this area to analyze any remaining archaeological
evidence and evaluate the damage caused by the ‘cleaning’ and the looting of the lots. In addition, the area southeast of the modern road where the Camino Real was identified became a priority to survey before any more looting activities took place.

The fieldwork covered an area of 4.89 acres \([19,800 \text{ m}^2]\) (Figure 5.3). Since this was a large area to cover and no previous excavations had occurred, a survey of the area was the best option to collect enough information to have a general idea of the layout of colonial structures and activity areas. Brian Molyneaux explains that a transect survey utilizing predetermined lines set a predetermined distance apart is useful when there is no archaeological evidence on the surface (Molyneaux 2005).

The selection of the size and dimensions of a test unit depends on the kind of information being sought (Glassow 2005). In Nombre de Dios, the objective was to locate features to suggest the town’s layout while causing minimum intrusion. It

![Figure 5.3: Aerial photography of Nombre de Dios with the surveyed area.](image)
would be an unforgivable mistake to undertake large-scale excavations during the first archaeological field season without having an idea of the distribution of the site. Therefore, a systematic survey with small excavations was the best option to initiate archaeological studies in Nombre de Dios. Based on an arbitrarily established transect, 185 test units of 50cms x 50cms were excavated every ten meters (Fig 4.4). Furthermore, Glassow explains,

"The objectives of test excavations are quite variable. At the most elementary level, an archaeologist may test to discover a site, especially if archaeological deposits are buried... Testing may also be done to establish site boundaries or to obtain basic information about the nature of a site – the depth of deposits, density of midden constituents, or the presence of indistinct, relatively large-scale features such as house pits, prepared structure floors, and baking pits. Finally, testing may be done to obtain representative samples of objects that are in relatively high density and ubiquitous, and the sample obtained may be sufficient to address research problems without any future larger-scale excavation... In summary, test excavations may be undertaken as a means of site discovery, site boundary definition, initial characterization of site deposits, acquisition of data for addressing major research issues, or some combination of these” (Glassow 2005: 144-148).

In addition to providing a general idea of the layout of a town, testing excavations can also provide features related to houses and patios, as well as materials that can suggest activity areas, trade relations, and cultural interactions.

To complement the archaeological excavations, Alexis Mojica from the University of Panama carried out a small geophysical study in three areas, the Camino Real, an area with a cobble paved structure, and an area with stone foundations. The geophysical studies were intended to further explore these areas and evaluate the potential of the site to undertake a larger geophysical survey. The results of the geophysical survey provided further information regarding the type of
Figure 5.4: Map of Nombre de Dios with the location of the surveyed area.
structure found and led to the design of a proposal from the Sorbonne University in France for a geophysical survey in Nombre de Dios.

The results of the excavations allowed to identify disturbed areas. Around 10 meters of each side of the modern road were disturbed during the construction of the road. The movement of the Nombre de Dios River and looters holes have destroyed the archaeological record of the west part of the colonial town. In the 1990s, the lots to the east of the modern road were rented to a manganese mining company who caused irreparable damages to the archaeological site. The northern part of the east area of study is heavily disturbed, and the area located to the south was completely destroyed with the construction of a pond.

Despite these disturbances, there is still a large area undisturbed with sixteenth century contexts. Surprisingly, stratigraphic layers with sixteenth century materials and features are relatively superficial. Some of the stone foundations were found around 10cms deep and others at 40cms. The area with undisturbed contexts does not present post-sixteenth century occupations. The excavations that reached sterile soil were usually as deep as 50cms. The sterile layers were dark brown sand or fine gravel. Some excavations did not reach sterile soil due to the finding of floors and unidentified features or, in a couple of cases, they were too deep to continue digging (e.g. possible wells). The common denominator of most of the excavations was the presence of solely sixteenth century materials with no signs of disturbances. The stratigraphy suggests that these areas have no post-sixteenth century occupations. A rare opportunity for the study of sixteenth-century American colonies.

In the following pages, I will further describe the results of these archaeological excavations and geophysical surveys. It was possible to identify numerous features related to buildings and activities as well as artifacts related to the
type of constructions and the activities practiced in Nombre de Dios. First, I will start
with the possible layout of the buildings and their construction techniques to sketch
the possible appearance of the town. Second, I will discuss the materials recovered to
complement the outline of the town and the lives of the inhabitants. The objective of
the description of the archaeological evidence is to be able to understand, through
features and artifacts, urban growth, development of regional networks, composition
of population, and the advantages or disadvantages of the location that caused the port
to remain so long in the same place and its subsequent relocation.

5.2 Archaeological Evidence of Structures

The existence of remains of the Camino Real is an important landmark that
provides clues regarding the direction of streets and the location of buildings in the
town. It also suggests a possible location of the plaza based on the sixteenth-century
documents discussed in the previous chapter. Before this finding, it was believed the Camino Real was destroyed after the transfer of the port to Portobelo as Antonelli and the Audiencia de Panama suggested at the end of the century. The finding of the paved Camino Real stretch also questions the accuracy of these historical accounts and the degree of destruction of the town when it was abandoned.

In the area surrounding the Camino Real, Alexis Mojica undertook studies of
electric tomography and electric cartography (Mojica 2007). The results further supported the idea of the existence of the Camino Real because it showed that the stone structure extends to the west (Figure 5.5). Excavations and geophysical studies documented 30 meters of the Camino Real. The direction of this stretch is east-west.
Furthermore, a similar structure was found on the west area of the site apparently with a north-south direction (Figure 5.6). It is feasible to suggest that this is also a street since the archives described the existence of a road from the beach to the plaza. However, it is necessary to undertake further studies because the archives also described the road to be of sand.

Evidence of at least two buildings with stone foundations was found in the area of study. These foundations were found 10cms deep except for ones found in a looters hole (Figure 5.7). Some of the stones used are coralline rocks, which is not the best type of stone for construction because of its weak composition and porosity, but it is commonly found in other Spanish colonies, for example in the Santo Domingo Monastery in Cartagena. Three of the four foundations found are relatively close to each other (less than 20 meters apart), even though the stones and depths are different; it is very likely they are part of the same building because of their orientation. The different types of stone used can be the result of different

![Image](image.png)

Figure 5.5: Resistivity map from the area of the Camino Real. The high values of resistivity might be associated with the paved road (Mojica 2007: 5).
construction stages of the buildings and/or limited accessibility to construction materials (Figure 5.7). As it was described in the previous chapter, the Casa de Contratación was located between the plaza and the beach (Figure 5.8). Considering the movement of the coastline to the north since the sixteenth century, the location of the foundations coincides with the archival descriptions of the Casa de Contratación. Mojica also undertook resistivity tests in this area. The results showed an area of

Figure 5.6: Accumulation of stones with an orientation north-south. Notice the similarities with the Camino Real.

Figure 5.7: Left: Foundations made of coralline stone. Right: second set of foundations found in a looters hole.
Figure 5.8: Hypothetical map of sixteenth century Nombre de Dios based on archaeological structures.
high resistivity, which might be related to the stone foundations (Figure 5.9). The other location of stone foundations is west of the modern road. This foundation still has mortar, which is an indication of the presence of a strong structure with efforts to protect from deterioration (Figure 5.10). Documents from the Audiencia de Panama dating after 1587, described the existence of lonjas [markets] to unload and keep merchandise. If the access from the sea to the town were through the second stone paved street found, it would be logically that a lonja would be located close this street. Furthermore the strategic location between the Casa de Contratación and the access to the beach could be also the result of trying to regulate and control the incoming merchandise from the fleets, and eliminate the barracks that the fleets used to build on the beach in the 1570s. However, the foundations can also be part of the Casa de Contratación and not an independent building. Further archaeological studies can help to answer this question.

![Figure 5.9: Resistivity map from stone foundations area. The high values of resistivity might be associated with the stone structure (Mojica 2007: 8).](image-url)
Another significant feature found was a pebbled patio located east of the possible Casa de Contratación. Mojica carried out resistivity tests to confirm that the structure is a patio and not a road (Figure 5.11). The only documentary evidence related to a patio concerns the Governor’s house, which is described as a large building with a fenced courtyard. However, the archival analysis located this building in the southeast corner of the plaza. The direction of the patio is delineated not only by the geophysical test but also by a line of adobes limiting the area covered by the pebbles. The evidence suggests the patio extends to the east of the excavation, opposite direction to the Casa de Contratación foundations. This patio was probably part of one of the houses that belonged to the contratación or to one of the high-class government officials.

Figure 5.10: Stone foundations in the West side of Nombre de Dios. Note the top layer of mortar.
In the early stages of Nombre de Dios, there were lots close to the beach that were initially assigned for the *Contratación* but later given to individuals living in the town. Also there were other houses built by the *Cabildo* with the intentions to rent, and they were also closed to the *Casa de Contratación*. It is likely that this area is the beginning of the east residential area of the town; however, it is necessary to highlight the absence of remains of the church. As it was described in the previous chapter, the church is the only other building described by Sir Francis Drake and some Spaniards as made of stone. After the documentary analysis and conversations with inhabitants of Nombre de Dios, it is likely that the church is located out of the surveyed area to the east. Drake’s description suggests that it was east of the plaza, a lawsuit from 1541 described its location among houses, and a current resident of Nombre de Dios related finding skeletons in her lot located on the east limit of the surveyed area. Finally, there is no indication in the archival documents that the Church was on the
plaza but that it was close to it. This location is not uncommon since Spanish colonial urban layout often placed cathedrals or churches in influential but not central locations.

Finally, other significant features found along the site were clay, lime, and mortar floors, which are possibly household floors (Figure 5.12). These floors were found as superficial as 10cms deep. The existence of three types of floors could be the result of limited access to lime. Lime not only served to make the floor more compact but also to absorb bad odors. Mortar floors are just a higher concentration of lime giving a stronger consistency to the floor. These three types of floors were continually replaced because humidity and use caused wear on them requiring continual maintenance. In places such as Cartagena, evidence of these types of floors has been commonly found inside houses and other buildings such as monasteries. In many cases, new floors are built on top of older ones to counteract the high level of water typical of the Caribbean region. In Cartagena, for example, lime floors covered

Figure 5.12: Evidence of different household floors found in Nombre de Dios. Left to right: mortar floor, clay floor, and lime floor.
clay floors, at the same time, *adoquin* [ceramic tiles] floors covered both clay and lime. Since the objective of the first archaeological survey in Nombre de Dios was to locate features, most of the excavations ended when a floor was identified. This was done in anticipation of undertaking large-scale excavations in the future with more specific objectives.

The variety of floors and the existence of stone foundations suggest a diversity of construction techniques used in the buildings of Nombre de Dios. In the following section, I will describe the different type of constructions that were likely to exist in the sixteenth century town and the evidence supporting their existence.

### 5.3 Construction Materials and Techniques

As it was explained in previous chapters, the physical aspects of colonial cities in America varied according to their function. The labor spent on the construction of buildings was closely related to the activities practiced by the inhabitants. Thus, we can imagine that city-ports would put emphasis on warehouses, markets, and docks. Port architecture would reflect the transitory character of its inhabitants along with a more stable government presence set to regulate the flux of people and merchandise. The organization of city-ports tended to be more flexible than other types of settlements based on the instability of trade networks, and the need for ports to adapt to the needs of the market to maintain their place in the system. A clear case of this flexibility is Cartagena. The administrative and trading functions of this city influenced its physical development. For example, two *plazas* were created to fulfill the commercial and governmental needs of the city.
However, not all sixteenth century city-ports became as complex as Cartagena. Limited access to construction materials influenced the type of structures built in New World Spanish colonies. Jose Maria Cruxent studied Nueva Cadiz, Venezuela, in the early 1970s. Based on archaeological studies, he established that some of the constructions were a mix of mud and stone with lime on the exterior of the house. However, he explains, "It would be wrong to think that all the houses in Nueva Cadiz were built of stone. There is evidence to say that in Barlovento and along the coast [Caribbean Coast]... there were humble houses with straw roofs and mud walls which remains did not survive the destruction of time" (Cruxent 1972: 34).

During the archaeological research conducted in Nombre de Dios, the three stone foundations found suggest that the town had at least one or two buildings built with stone. It is likely that these were public buildings given that more human labor and money was used in their construction. In addition, in other contemporary towns such as La Isabela, public buildings had stone foundations (Deagan and Cruxent 2002). Since many settlements had limited access to construction materials, the more elaborated buildings were a mixture of stone and tapia.

Deagan explains the tapia construction method in detail:

"A tapia wall is built up in sections between two wooden forms, typically in units of 1.5 to three meters long and from .5 to one meter high (Norton 1997:43-44). The width of the forms obviously depends on the intended height for the wall, but most rammed earth walls are no less than .4 meters wide, because a worker has to stand between the forms on the top of the wall in order to ram the earth. The typical ratio of width to height for a tapia wall is from 1:8 to 1:12 (Norton 1997: 47). A layer of dry earth, often mixed with stones, fired clay, or lime aggregate as
reinforcement, is placed in the forms, and compacted manually... When one section is complete, the forms are dismantled and moved to an adjacent section. As the wall is built up, the forms are attached to the top of the already completed section, leaving horizontal depressions in the wall between each section (Deagan and Cruxent 2002: 100)."

In addition to tapia buildings, another common construction method was adobe buildings. Among the construction materials recovered archaeologically, there are 37.35 Lb of adobe fragments. Adobes are sun-dried bricks made of a mix of sand, gravel, clay, water, and sometimes straw. The blocks are formed in wooden molds and dried by the sun (Figure 5.13). Adobes are never kiln fired which creates unstable structures that shrink or swell according to their water content; higher water content reduces their strength. However, the adobe construction was complemented with more stable materials such as wood, clay tiles, and lime mortars (National Park

Figure 5.13: Manufacture of adobe bricks. (Taken from Wikimedia Commons http://www.italaska.info/wiki/Image:RomaniaDanubeDelta_MakingMaterialForCon structing0002jpg.JPG)
Although adobes are unstable structures, they have been favored in Central America because they are easily rebuilt after earthquakes (Markman 1956). Both tapia and adobe constructions used lime or mud plaster to delay the deterioration of the walls. Lime mortar has the same unstable character of the adobe constructions, which makes it the perfect material to bond to adobe and tapia. However, it is weak and susceptible to moisture absorption (Markman 1956). Clusters of plaster were found in excavations proving its use in the colonial constructions of Nombre de Dios.

The foundations of adobe buildings varied. As previously explained, stone sources were limited in many of the new American colonies; Nombre de Dios was not an exception. Thus, the construction technique used in buildings depended on their function and the availability of materials. Some foundations were practically non-existent; adobe-building foundations were constructed of bricks, fieldstones, or cavity walls (double) infilled with rubble stone, tile fragments, or seashells (National Park Service 1984). The low structural strength of the construction restricted the height of the buildings, which were commonly limited to two stories.

To finish the walls, it was common to place a wooden timber called tirante within the last courses of the adobe blocks to serve as support and distribute the weight of the roof along the wall. Sometimes to give more support, a cercha [truss] was added consisting of three more timbers, called tornapuntales and pendolones. Based on the map of Nombre de Dios found in Drake Manuscript, it is very likely that this technique was used in some of the buildings in the town (Figure 5.14).

According to historic maps and Spanish colonial architecture found in other American colonies, side or front dos aguas [gabled] roofs were commonly used.
Figure 5.14: Images explaining different construction techniques and their correspondence in a map of Nombre de Dios from the Histoire Naturelle Des Indies [Drake Manuscript]. From left to right, top to bottom: drawing showing a cercha (Tejados y Cubiertas. http://html.rincondelvago.com/tejados-y-cubiertas.html); detail of 1596 map showing a cercha; roof tile construction (Tejados y Cubiertas. http://html.rincondelvago.com/tejados-y-cubiertas.html); detail of 1596 map showing different types of roofs, construction techniques, and a zaguan; drawing showing a dutch gable (Sketch by Bill Bradley. Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Rf-iso3.gif); detail of 1596 map showing a dutch gable.
These roofs were made with thatch or clay roof tiles (Figure 5.14). While thatch is a perishable material, ceramic roof tiles can still be found in the archaeological evidence. The shape of all the tiles is the typical teja española or criolla (a.k.a. barrel tile). They have been found on Spanish colonies from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. Samples found in Nombre de Dios follow the usual tapered shape, allowing the construction of roofs by fitting the small end of each tile into the wider end of another tile (Figure 5.14). The dimensions of these tiles [40cms length x 10/15cms wide] and other large fragments are similar to the dimensions from ceramic roof tiles found in other places such as La Isabela and Cartagena. The shape of the roof tiles reflects its manufacturing technique. It has been suggested that tiles had similar dimensions to a human thigh because the craftsmen molded tiles on their thighs (Therrien, personal communication 2008).

The ceramic roof tiles found in Nombre de Dios were red or white. The use of white roof tiles is still unknown. However, the difference in quantity could suggest that white roof tiles were decorative while red roof tiles were used in most of the roof structures (Table 5.1). Moreover, if white roof tiles were sun-dried tiles, they would follow the properties of adobe bricks, which means their strength was compromised with their water content thus creating a fragile roof structure. Then, it is suggested that the preferred material for roofs was fired-clay roof tiles, while white roof tiles were used in small structures such as a zaguan [front porch] for decorative purposes.

The limited used proposed for white roof tiles is also based on distribution analysis (Figure 5.15). There are three major concentrations of white tiles; curiously, they are not in areas surrounding the plaza but in areas more likely to be residential or commercial. This location suggests individual preferences for the use of white roof
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency (Lb)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White roof tile</td>
<td>107.7</td>
<td>10.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red roof tile</td>
<td>884.65</td>
<td>82.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adobe</td>
<td>37.35</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoquin</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White adoquin</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canal</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1071.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: Colonial construction materials found in Nombre de Dios.

tiles, perhaps as reflection of social status or cultural background. Further archaeological studies in the residential area could shed light on this aspect through the analysis of the degree of their use in residences of the general population. Other minor concentrations of white roof tiles are around the proposed location of the plaza, this location does not present any concentration of materials related to construction nor architectural features, further suggesting the use of this space as the plaza.

Another architectural ornament found in the 1570s map was the Dutch gable (a.k.a. Flemish gable). This is an ornamental triangular projection in the façade. This feature spread from the Low Countries and was common in Renaissance architecture (Figure 5.14).

Among other construction materials identified in Nombre de Dios are ceramic drainage canals. These are ceramics set in the roof or walls to carry off excess rainwater from roofs and patios. The canals have thick walls with grooves in the interior and exterior surfaces. In addition, both interior and exterior surfaces are green lead glazed except for its wider side. A large canal fragment was recovered
Figure 5.15: Map of the archeological features and distribution of white roof tiles and canals.
demonstrating the similarity in shape with ceramic roof tiles but with smaller length: 35 cms long by 21 cms diameter in its wider end (Figure 5.16). The similarities in shape with roof tiles, and the absence of glaze in the wider side, suggest that the canals were laid inverted over each other.

The distribution of canals around the site suggests limited use in construction. This limitation is perhaps the result of costs of importation since the characteristics of the manufacturing technique suggest an Iberian origin. The small concentrations found correspond with some concentrations of white roof tiles suggesting the simultaneous use of both features (Figure 5.15). This is another aspect to consider in future research.

Ornamental architectural materials such as adoquin, pinnacles, and tiles were also identified in the archaeological remains of Nombre de Dios (Figures 5.15 and 5.16). These remains are found in small quantities given that they are not essential for construction; however, they can indicate different social status or cultural backgrounds. As mentioned in Chapter IV, there were some non-Spanish Europeans living in the port, their houses’ architecture could follow customs of their places of origin. Adoquin is a flat, usually square or rectangular, flooring tile. Two varieties were found in Nombre de Dios, a fired clay adoquin and an adobe-like adoquin (white). This second type was found in the cobbled-paved patio delineating the area of the patio (Figure 5.17). The white adoquin frequently disintegrates and is easily scratched, suggesting a decorative use such as delineating a patio or interior floors. Kathleen Deagan suggests that adoquin or flat bricks “were used in La Isabela for trim rather than basic construction elements” (Deagan and Cruxent 2002: 102).

Similar to the physical aspect of the white roof tile, adobe, and white adoquin, a fragment of a pinnacle was found (Figure 5.16). After the Moorish expulsion from
Figure 5.16: Construction materials and some examples of how they would look in a construction. From top to bottom, left to right: canal found in Nombre de Dios (scale 1:1cm); La Casa de Doña Ana, Guanajuato-Mexico; pinnacle fragment found in Nombre de Dios (scale 1:1cm); Cathedral of Seville, Spain; fragments of azulejo (scale 1:1cm); azulejo fragment from Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla, Spain.
Spain, Italian sculptors and artisans arrived in Spain introducing the northern Italian Renaissance. However, many Moorish and Gothic elements, such as pinnacles persisted. A pinnacle is a Gothic architectonic ornament that creates a sensation of more height to buildings.

Finally, among the ornamental ceramic elements discovered in Nombre de Dios, five fragments of *azulejos* [decorative tiles] were identified. *Azulejos* were used as a decorative element in fountains, baptismal fonts, doorways, main stairs, and as scenic pictures of the period (Therrien 2000). During the sixteenth century there were different techniques used to manufacture *azulejos*; however, in Nombre de Dios, only the *Pisano* technique has been identified. Francesco Niculoso “Il Pisano” arrived in Seville at the end of the fifteenth century and introduced the concept of painting pictures on tiles in contrast to the *cuerda seca* technique used during the fifteenth century to separate colors in a tile and thus limiting decorations to geometric patterns (Figure 5.18).

Although *Pisano azulejo* became very popular during Francesco Niculoso’s life, after his death in 1529 the *Pisano* production practically stopped. *Pisano* technique became popular again after 1560 when King Phillip II appointed Juan
Figure 5.18: Top: examples from wall decorations with azulejo, Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla, Spain. Bottom, left to right: Pisano azulejo from the Altar de la Anunciación (disappeared), made by Francesco Niculoso; azulejo showing the cuerda seca technique (both tiles are in the Museo Arqueológico de Sevilla.)
Flores [Jan Floris], a Flemish artisan as tile-maker to the king. Flores and other Flemish artisans established workshops around Talavera de La Reina and Seville. Among the Sevillian manufacturers, the Valladares workshop was known to export *Pisano azulejos* to America, for example the Santo Domingo monastery in Santo Domingo, which was built between 1604 and 1606. The production of *Pisano azulejos* in the Valladares workshop seems to date from the late sixteenth century to mid-seventeenth century. The fragments found in Nombre de Dios have been identified as Valladares based on a fragment found in the Museo Arqueologico de Sevilla (Figure 5.16).

In addition to the structural and decorative artifacts just described, nails are basic architectural elements found in archaeological contexts. Nails are one of the most common artifacts found related to constructions and furniture. However, their diversity in shape, size, weight, and condition makes it difficult to generate typologies. Stanley South created for Santa Elena one of the best typologies for sixteenth century nails (South, Skowronek, and Johnson 1988). This typology is based on a nineteenth century nails typology and on archival documents. Although weight is one of the characteristics to consider when classifying nails, weight is not reliable since it is partly determined by the level of preservation of the nails. Thus, length and shape are more reliable characteristics to classify nails.

Based on the length of Santa Elena’s nails, South established 17 categories for joiner’s and ship’s carpenter nails in his Spanish nail size model (Table 5.2). However, it is not clear how joiner’s and ship’s carpenter nails are differentiated besides the rose head. Rose-headed nails are nails with hammer blow marks on the head. These nail heads are usually round to rectangular and are designed to sit on the surface of the wood. South suggests that the degree of dome of the rose head
determines its use. Joiner’s nails have a fat to low dome profile while ship’s carpenter nails have a high domed head (South, Skowronek, and Johnson 1988). Although rose head is a good characteristic to consider, only four of the twenty-six types proposed for Nombre de Dios are rose-headed nails. Thus, it was possible to determine that 475 are joiner’s nails while only 40 are ship’s carpenter nails, and 898 complete nails are undetermined.

South suggests three shapes for nail heads: R-headed, T-headed, and L-headed. R-headed nails are the flat to dome rose-head nails. The small nail head of T-headed and L-headed nails allows countersinking the nail head flat with a finish surface such as a floor. The large T-headed spikes were “designed to be pounded into the body of the wood, or into a groove, allowing the surface to remain flush since
they are hammered into a narrow shape no wider than the width of the shank” (South, Skowronek, and Johnson 1988: 41). In contrast, large L-headed nails are used to hold power rather than disappearing into the body of the timber it is holding.

Finally, South suggests different functions according to the size of the nail. He creates general groups to describe the main functions of the nails. Alfaxia and smaller nails were used for flooring, braces for yardarms, and matting, while escoria and larger nails were used to fasten heavy timbers for structural frames. Additionally, estoperoles were used in ships “to fasten grass matting to stanchions for containing cargo during shipment” (South, Skowronek, and Johnson 1988: 41).

Twenty-six types of nails were established for Nombre de Dios based on total length, body shape and diameter, and head shape and diameter (Table 5.3 and Figures 5.19 and 5.20). When the different types established in Nombre de Dios are compared with the typology established by South, 1305 nails (81.20%) fall in the categories of nails used for flooring, braces, etc; while only 98 nails (6.09%) would be used in structural frames. It is necessary to further study this typology to confirm the possible uses and origins of the nails by comparing with information from archival documents, and further compare with South’s typology for Santa Elena.

The analysis of the ceramic and metal materials related to buildings provides evidence of the different styles and type of structures that existed in Nombre de Dios. Clay roof tiles were more common than expected. Although Spanish descriptions from the sixteenth century describe poorly constructed buildings, the large quantity of roof tiles, adobe bricks, and drainage ceramic canals suggest the opposite. The resulting image of the sixteenth century town is very close to the 1570s English map from Drake Manuscript describing a town with diverse architecture and imported European features. In addition, the different architectural features found in Nombre
Figure 5.19: Nail types found in Nombre de Dios
Figure 5.20: Nail types found in Nombre de Dios.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Length (mm)</th>
<th>Body Shape</th>
<th>Body Diameter (mm)</th>
<th>Head shape</th>
<th>Head Diameter (mm)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>South’s typology (1988)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Square</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>Tillado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rose round/joiner’s nails</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Media Barrote?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rose round/joiner’s nail</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Media Barrote?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Barrote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Square</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Flat round</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tillado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Square</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Rose round/ship carpenter</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Tillado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Triangle</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>[Horseshoe]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7A</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Triangle</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>[Horseshoe]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Flat round</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>Alfaxia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>+70</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Flat round</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Alfaxia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>+60</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Flat round</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Barrote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9A</td>
<td>+60</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Flat round</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Barrote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>+70</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Flat square</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>Alfaxia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Flat round</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Tillado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11A</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Flat round</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tillado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>L/joiner’s nails</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>Media Barrote?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Flat round</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Tillado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Flat square</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Half tillado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Flat round</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Estoperole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Flat square</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Escora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16A</td>
<td>+180</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>Flat square</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Escora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16B</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Flat square</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Alfaxia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16C</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Flat square</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Barrote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Media escora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Flat round</td>
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<tr>
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<td>130</td>
<td>Round</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Flat square</td>
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<td>Media escora</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1607</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: 5.3: Characteristics of nails found in Nombre de Dios.
de Dios suggest an eclectic architecture resulting from the Spanish cultural complexity of the sixteenth century and the presence of other European immigrants.

In addition to the construction of buildings, one of the biggest problems faced by coastal Spanish towns was the supply of fresh water. The Spanish solved this problem by building public wells and private *aljibes* [cisterns], which are large enclosed constructions, sometimes underground, used to collect rain water (Covo Torres 1991). Although *aljibes* were very popular among Spaniards, they were expensive constructions that poor ports such as Nombre de Dios could probably not afford. Archival documents referred to the lack of fresh water in 1557. The *Cabildo* suggested that the best way to solve this problem was to bring a river to the town; however, this project was never carried on because of its high cost. The construction of wells was a cheaper and faster solution to provide water; yet, they were temporal solutions since they could be easily contaminated or dried.

Stanley South found that Spanish wells were built in Santa Elena using wooden barrels. The Spanish occupied Santa Elena between 1566 and 1587. Four wells were found from this period. The wells in Santa Elena consisted of two staked barrels, with the ends removed, used as liners (Figure 5.21). South described the barrels recovered in Santa Elena as oak wood barrels bound with iron and wooden bands, at the same time, the wooden bands were bound with basketry withes to hold the ends in place (South, Skowronek, and Johnson 1988). This description was possible because there were barrels in situ preserved underwater in three of the wells found.

During the fieldwork in Nombre de Dios, two excavations (PG00104 and PG00108) had large pieces of iron bands (Figure 5.15). The bands were too large to be removed from the excavations and their positions suggested they were in situ, that
An Interpretive View of the 16th Century Well at Santa Elena

A Spanish vineyard ditch crossed the well fill, suggesting the well was used between 1566-1576. Streched barrels formed a well liner into which a well bucket was lowered. Reconstructed size is based on symmetry of recovered barrel. A humus layer with melon seeds, bark, grass, etc. accumulated as the barrel silted full. The bottom half of the barrel was forced into the subsoil sand. The top barrel was removed by Spaniards when the well was abandoned.

Excavated barrel in well (Fig. 14)

Figure 5.21: Sixteenth century Santa Elena well using wooden barrels (South 1988:193).

is, they were part of a barrel once buried there. Soil conditions and high humidity are not conducive to preserving wood. However, the two excavations with iron bands presented different characteristics from adjacent excavations. For example, they are very deep and have large quantities of artifacts. Furthermore, the material remains passed 70cms depth, while sterile soil of adjacent excavations was found between 40 and 60cms. These characteristics can indicate the existence of wells.

Furthermore, stratigraphic analysis suggests the presence of barrels. Excavation PG00108 does not present significant changes in the stratigraphy. This characteristic is perhaps due to the position of the iron bands. The bands are located on the south wall of the excavation suggesting that most of the excavation area is the
interior of the barrel. In contrast, excavation PG00104 presents changes in the stratigraphy. The stratigraphic levels and the position of the iron bands appear to have a direct relation. A close up of the north wall of the excavation suggests three stratigraphic levels. Level two is a fill with a high frequency of large fragments of roof tile and brick, while level three is clay with few artifacts. The characteristics above suggest the existence of some type of construction such as a well (Figure 5.22).

In addition to the use of barrels in the construction of wells, South suggests that iron bands from barrels were often reused. The secondary use of iron bands could be related to woodworking tools such as augers and gouges (South 1988). Twelve fragments of iron bands were isolated findings around the site. Some of the fragments are bent and others are not; however, it is impossible at this time to assign them specific functions. On the other hand, hinges and brackets were identified in Nombre de Dios (Figure 5.22). Iron hinges were used for windows and doors while “U” shaped iron brackets were probably door-locking bars for holding a sliding wooden beam for securing a door (South, Skowronek, and Johnson 1988). These hinges and brackets could be imported or locally manufactured by reusing iron bands from imported barrels.

When wells were abandoned, they were sometimes filled with trash. However, trash pits also existed in Nombre de Dios. Two trash pits were identified by the accumulation of burned ceramic materials. However, the characteristics of the materials found suggest that these pits were used to dispose of the remains of one or more burned constructions, perhaps after a fire. The existence of burned roof tiles and adobes in trash pits suggest that the town had the aspect of a well-establish city decades before its abandonment. Finding burned construction materials in trash pits
Figure 5.22: Top: Excavation PG00104 showing the location and characteristics of the excavation. North wall close up from excavation PG00104 with the delineation of 3 stratigraphic levels. Bottom: Excavation PG00108 with the location of iron bands from barrels. Iron bands recovered from other excavations around the site. Iron hinge (bottom left) and door bracket (bottom right).
and more materials on the surface without trace of fires implies that not only buildings were using roof tiles and adobes years before the abandonment of the town, but also that there was enough time to reconstruct buildings following the 1596 Drake's attack and fire.

5.4 Artifacts for Domestic and Personal Use

City-ports are good sources of information regarding consumerism and trade. Therefore, it is not surprising that a diverse quantity of artifacts was found in the archaeological record of Nombre de Dios. James Deetz has demonstrated that frequency of artifacts in the archaeological record, specifically ceramics, is influenced by availability, need, function, and social status (Deetz 1973). Furthermore, McEwan suggests that,

"Choices concerning what would be available in the colonies were made by manufacturers (presumably based on demand), by exporters (undoubtedly interested in turning the largest profit from each shipment), and by the colonists themselves, who were able to influence manufacturers and exporters by how much they were willing to buy... material displays were a well-developed penchant among Spaniards. It is therefore not surprising that the classes of material culture recovered from Puerto Real that reveal the least amount of aboriginal influence are the most visible ones" (McEwan 1995 in Deagan 1995: 223)

It has been suggested that since imported objects are expensive and their acquisition is limited, they would be reserved for public display, while artifacts used for food preparation would be of local, native, and/or African manufacture. However, in the case of Nombre de Dios, the circumstances are different. The archaeological
record produced 3,172 ceramic fragments. These fragments were identified and catalogued in 33 different ceramic types related to domestic activities (Appendix 2 Tables 2.1 and 2.2). The preservation of ceramics in archaeological contexts simplifies their analysis because characteristics used to identify form, function, manufacturing techniques, decorations, and origin are recognizable. Most of the ceramic assemblage (96.79%) found in Nombre de Dios was imported from Europe or other American colonies (0.16%), with only 192 fragments (6.05%) identified as possibly manufactured locally (Figure 5.23). However, the local manufacture is questionable because wares with these characteristics (coarse earthenware) were also imported. The appraisal guide from 1565 listed 'ollas de barro' [clay pots] as one of the imports from Nicaragua (see appraisal guide in Appendix 1 Document 5).

In addition to ceramics, other materials such as glass, metals, and faunal remains provide information regarding domestic activities in Nombre de Dios.

![Domestic ceramics chart](image)

Figure 5.23: Percentage of imported vs. local ceramics. Regional ceramics refer to ceramics manufactured in Panama City.
Although these artifacts are more difficult to find in sixteenth century sites, the information they provide complements the information obtained from ceramic fragments. Of the 385 glass fragments recovered at Nombre de Dios, nine different forms were identified, all of them related to domestic use (Appendix 2 Tables 2.3 and 2.4). Additionally, 1,618 metal fragments related to domestic activities were identified (Appendix 2 Table 2.5). In the next section, all the artifacts and faunal remains used in domestic activities will be presented in categories established by their functions: storage, food preparation, consumption, medicinal and non-kitchen, and leisure and personal ornaments.

Storage

One of the claims most frequently found in archival documents is related to the dependence on imported products for the subsistence of Nombre de Dios. Such dependence is reflected in the existence of storage containers needed to store products arriving in port. Commercial containers used to transport liquids and grains in transatlantic and transisthmic travels were often used in households. Ceramic storage containers in the sixteenth century were limited to botijas, orzas, and tinajas, all produced in Europe and replicated in the New World. In Nombre de Dios, botijas and orzas were imported; however, tinajas were apparently produced locally or regionally to fulfill household needs. Since botijas and orzas are imported containers and their primarily function was commercial transport, these vessels will be further discussed in the section on commercial activities.
Tinajas are very large containers that follow native or African ceramic traditions. They are coarse earthenware types. These vessels are meant to store liquids more than transport them. Florence and Robert Lister describe tinajas as high-shouldered jars for storage, usually in warehouses. It has been suggested that tinajas were vessels used in Andalusia to store water in hot climates (Lister and Lister 1987). Marken suggests that tinajas were also used in ships to store water during transatlantic trips; they were placed in different parts of the ship as water dispensers (Marken 1994). Marken found that tinajas replaced wood barrels; “If timber was in short supply, the inclusion of large tinajas would suggest a substitute for barrels. Ceramic containers would also serve to keep the contents cooler and may have simply been the preferred method for storing” (Marken 1994: 187).

The production of tinajas was rapidly extended to the New World; thus, it is difficult to establish their origins unless they are made with the same ceramic type paste used for botijas as was reported by Marken (1994) and Therrien et al (2002). The twenty-two tinaja fragments found in Nombre de Dios belong to vessels apparently produced in America (Figure 5.24). The fragments are unglazed coarse earthenware with large particles of quartz and sand. The coarse temper and finish are similar to fragments found in other colonies such as Cartagena and Panama City, where they have been catalogued as of local manufacture. However, there is no evidence for the moment to suggest ceramic production in Nombre de Dios. Furthermore, only 177 fragments of this type were recovered which suggests that these vessels were brought from other colonies in ships, following Marken’s suggestion of their use in maritime travel, or in the mule trains from Panama City. In addition, the 1565 appraisal guide also suggests their importation.
In addition to storing liquids and foods for consumption, there was a need to store merchandise. The most common way to store goods, especially fabrics, was in chests. The only evidence found of the use of chests in Nombre de Dios, besides archival documents, are locks and hinges. Three different types of locks have been identified: chest, padlock, and stock locks. The information regarding locks in sixteenth century Spanish colonies in America is practically non-existent in archaeology. The only other archaeological site where locks have been reported is Santa Elena where a chest lock similar to the one pictured in Figure 5.25 was found. Four chest locks were found with the same characteristics.

Padlocks are more often found. However, sixteenth century padlocks in Spanish colonies are seldom reported. Ivor Noël Hume explains that padlocks with a sliding bolt to engage the hasp were produced in the fifteenth and sixteenth century in
Europe, especially in Germany. Thus, it is probable that some padlocks were imported to Spain and eventually transported to America with other products (Noël Hume 1969). The padlocks of the sixteenth century were round or triangular. Three padlocks were found in Nombre de Dios (Figure 5.25).

Finally, stock-locks are door locks. The plate stock-lock is one of the simplest forms of door locks. It consists of wards and other parts mounted on an iron plate, which were seated into the wooden stock (Hume 1969). So far only one type of stock-lock has been found in Nombre de Dios (Figure 5.25).

Figure 5.25: Iron locks found in Nombre de Dios. Top, left to right: chest lock similar to Santa Elena's lock, padlock. Bottom: plain stock-lock. Chest hinges donated to the collection.
Storing products had some limitations. First, imported food products were susceptible to the environment. The high humidity in Nombre de Dios restricted the period of time when a product was in condition to be consumed and stored. Second, the quantity of imported products was limited to fulfill all the local needs. Many times, colonizers turned to local sources to satisfy their demand for basic products, and in many cases, simple aspects such as diet were slowly modified according to the environment.

**Food Acquisition and Preparation**

One of the most difficult factors European colonizers faced when they arrived to the New World was food production. Access to food products dictates the capability to maintain previous diets, and the need to adjust and replace products that are not available. The adaptation to a new environment, along with the introduction of new species, fulfills the need of traditional diets. One of the best sources to reveal these changes is animal bones. Paola Andrea Sanabria undertook the analysis of faunal remains. Based on the type of animals found, cuts on the bones, and fishing techniques, Sanabria determined that Spanish colonist included seafood in their diets and introduced domestic animals such as cows and pigs to the area (Sanabria 2008).

The seafood consumed consisted of fish and mollusks. Forty-nine fish remains were identified among the faunal remains from Nombre de Dios (Table 5.4). The size of the fish is a good indicator of the degree of selection made by the inhabitants of the town. The type of fish consumed indicates fishing from canoes in search of fish weighing between 400 grams to 40 kilograms in coastal areas with depth variations between 50 and 600 meters. Fishing was done using nets and hooks.
Nineteen lead weights were found in one test unit. Although all the weights are the same style, there is evidence that different types of nets were used in Nombre de Dios. The variability in style and weight of lead weights suggests that nets were used to capture different types of fish and/or turtles in different habitats. The rolled lead weights found are irregular and very light weight while the second type, a triangular solid lead block, is heavier and probably used in deeper waters. Additionally, the presence of a harpoon suggests the practice of different fishing techniques in Nombre de Dios (Figure 5.26).

The exploitation of the reefs is also evident through the 229 mollusks fragments identified from excavations. The presence of certain mollusk species (*Bulimus* and *Neocyclotus*) indicates that there were lagoons and woodlands close by. Additionally, evidence of *Agaricia, Acropora*, and *Diploria* corals and mollusks from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common name</th>
<th>Species</th>
<th>NR</th>
<th>% NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bagre [Catfish]</td>
<td><em>Aridae sp</em></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pompano</td>
<td><em>Trachinotus cf</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jurel [Scad]</td>
<td><em>Caranx cf</em></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiburon [Shark]</td>
<td><em>Carcharhinus cf leucas</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robalo [Sea bass]</td>
<td><em>Centropomus sp</em></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pez pluma</td>
<td><em>Elops saurus</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croco</td>
<td><em>Pomadasys cf</em></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roncador</td>
<td><em>Haemulopsis sp</em></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berrogate</td>
<td><em>Lobotes surinimensis</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Snapper</td>
<td><em>Lutjanus sp</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pez Sierra [Sawfish]</td>
<td><em>Pristis microdon</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corvina [Conger eel]</td>
<td><em>Cynoscion sp</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barracuda</td>
<td><em>Sphyraena barracuda</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                |                          | 49 | 100% |

Table 5.4: List of identified fish remains from Nombre de Dios.
excavations suggests that the coastal line was closer to the colonial town in the sixteenth century than it is today. The inhabitants of Nombre de Dios preferred to collect mollusks from marine strataums with rocky coasts and high-energy swells, and water areas between 2 and 15 meters deep. The mollusks most consumed in the sixteenth century were whelks and clams.

Based on the variability of mollusk and fish found in the archaeological evidence, it appears that seasonality played a crucial role in the availability of seafood sources and the different areas where food was obtained. For example, fish were more abundant in marine estuaries during rainy seasons while coralline areas offered easy access during dry seasons to collect mollusks and fishing in deep waters (Sanabria 2008). This variability meant different amounts of labor by the inhabitants of the town. Abundant fish in estuaries in the rainy season resulted in large quantities of small fish with minimum labor while deep fishing in the summer meant more labor
but larger size fish that could feed more people. In addition to seafood, reptiles were consumed. Forty percent of the 44 fragments of turtle found in the archaeological survey presented cuts caused by preparation and consumption. Two different types of turtles were identified, jicotea and morrocoy. These two types of turtles live in different habitats. Jicotea turtles are found in areas close to fresh water sources with high vegetation, while morrocoy turtles inhabit grasslands and low vegetation areas such as areas used for agriculture.

Besides seafood and reptiles, birds played a small part in the colonists diet. Chicken and turkey were found with cuts suggesting their consumption. The 1565 appraisal guide describes that chickens were brought in the fleets and they could not be consumed right away because they were too skinny. Faunal evidence suggests that birds were not part of the regular diet and their adaptation to Nombre de Dios was not as successful as cattle and pigs.

Mammals were the animals most consumed in Nombre de Dios. Thirteen different mammal species were identified, 411 fragments were cattle remains. The cow bones found suggest that tough meat, for example from the head and tail, were used to prepare stews, soups, and ground beef. The parts with tender meat, such as tenderloin and ribs, were grilled. A larger number of pig fragments were found suggesting pork was the most consumed meat in Nombre de Dios. The cuts found followed the traditional Iberian cuts to produce ham, bacon, lard, and ribs for soups. The cuts found in the bones suggest that they were made with sharp tools such as axes and machetes; however, the only sharp tools found related to butchery were a couple of knives (Figure 5.27)
The landscape of Nombre de Dios changed with the clearance of fields for cattle and agriculture. There are few artifacts found relating to agricultural activities in Nombre de Dios (Figure 5.28). The small quantity of tools found is possibly the result of the emphasis on commercial activities in the port and the dependence on importation of food products such as flour. Furthermore, archival records describe the difficulty to cultivate the land. On the other hand, the analysis of faunal remains suggests that there was some degree of agricultural activity in the town that resulted in the modification of the landscape creating areas with low vegetation. At the end of the sixteenth century, the Audiencia de Panama described the existence of fields in the town.

In summary, the diet at Nombre de Dios consisted in high consumption of mammals followed by birds, reptiles, fish, and mollusks. From the mammals, the consumption of beef and pork suggests the continuity of Iberian traditions. The cuts and type of bones found followed Iberian patterns of consumption. The Iberian diet
consisted of wine, meat, bread, and olive oil. When the Spanish arrived in the New World, the successful adaptation of some animals and plants allowed the colonists to maintain Iberian diets to some degree; however, some foods had to be replaced. For example, wheat was replaced with corn or cazabe, and olive oil with lard. The processing of foods is only evident so far through ollas and mortars.

From the ceramic assemblage recovered, only three fragments (0.10%) have been identified as belonging to ollas [cooking pots] and mortars (Appendix 2 Table 2.1 and 2.2). The burdo local ollas identified had traces of soot, suggesting the use of an open flame for cooking. Ollas are a common cooking form found among the American colonies, this form is argued to be of Native ceramic tradition because it has been found in prehispanic contexts. When olla fragments are found in colonial
contexts, they are usually coarse earthenware ceramics and maintain native ceramics characteristics such as horizontal handles. In places such as Cartagena, olla fragments present characteristics not only from Native ceramic traditions but also from African traditions (Therrien et al. 2002). Further study could clarify the origins of the burdo local ceramic type as well as suggest other manufactured forms that could be used in food preparation. The use of ollas also suggests the preparation of liquid-based stews, potages, or porridges (Deagan and Cruxent 2002).

Mortars are vessels used to grind grains and spices. In descriptions by Bartolomé de Las Casas, Deagan and Cruxent found that each person had to grind their own ration of wheat (Deagan and Cruxent 2002). The ceramic fragment found was Columbia Plain [Columbia Liso], which is one of the most common ceramic types found in sixteenth-century Spanish American colonies. This type is more commonly found in platos and escudillas, which are consumption forms. Although another mortar was found, it was not ceramic but marble. The mortar did not have a bottom because the humidity conditions of Nombre de Dios had deteriorated the material. However, the mortar does have a spout (Figure 5.29), which indicates the addition of liquids or sauces to the ground grains and spices.

In addition to the marble mortar, a large fragment of a stone metate was found on the site. This metate was also used as a mortar. It is a stone with a flat surface where grains and seeds are ground (Figure 5.30). Both mortars and metates could be used to process the grains imported in the botijas from Spain, as well as maize from America.

Only these three forms -olla, mortar, and metate- provide evidence of food preparation activities (Table 5.5). Deagan found similar conditions in other American colonies, “several of the most common pottery forms found both at La Isabela and at
sixteenth-century Andalusia sites—morteros, cantaros, jarros, and fuentes—are found only rarely at Puerto Real and Concepcion” (Deagan and Cruxent 2002: 291). It is necessary to study other areas of colonial Nombre de Dios to collect more evidence of cooking activities. The lack of this evidence is possibly due to the area where the survey took place. A study focusing on residential areas should produce more artifacts relating to food preparation.

Figure 5.29: Three different angles of marble mortar found in Nombre de Dios.

Figure 5.30: Metate fragment from Nombre de Dios and example of a metate (http://www.nps.gov/archive/meve/edu_resources/artifacts/pages/i43e_jpg.htm)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burdo Local</td>
<td>Olla</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia Liso</td>
<td>Mortar</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marble</td>
<td>Mortar</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>Metate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5: Ceramic types and frequency of food preparation forms

**Ceramics for Consumption**

Ross Jamieson, another historical archaeologist studying Spanish American colonies, proposes that visible items were an essential part of the maintenance of Spanish ethnicity (Jamieson 2001).

"The material culture of the dining table was one of the most important locations for the expression of these relations [interethnic]... The practice of dining in the Spanish colonies reinforced relationships of power through the definition of polite behavior, which was partially predicated on the presence of proper table wares" (Jamieson 2001:45)

Archaeological works in Florida and the Caribbean suggest that Spanish ceramics, such as majolicas, are related to the social and economic status of the households where they were used. Thus, a Spanish householder would avoid the use of locally produced vessels on the dining table while allowing them in cooking activities or as part of the servant’s properties. Thus, it is not surprising to find both local and foreign materials in Spanish colonies. However, in the case of Nombre de
Dios, only three types of materials appear to be locally or regionally produced: Local Fino, Prehispanico, and Majolica Panama.

The Local Fino sherds have sand and small quartz fragments in the paste. Only 17 fragments were found and the only form identified was a cuenco with handles (Figure 5.31). Fragments from this type are considered consumption forms because the thickness of the sherds would not resist the heat from cooking. The second local type is called Prehispanic; however, this should not be interpreted as dating from pre-Columbian periods since there is no archaeological evidence of prehispanic occupation in the site. The name refers to ceramics with prehispanic features possibly produced by native groups as shown in Figure 5.31. The existence of only four fragments possibly means that the vessels were brought from other places. In the previous chapter, some archival documents regarding the presence of natives in

Figure 5.31: Left: Local Fino cuenco fragment from Nombre de Dios. Right: Handle from prehispanic vessel from Nombre de Dios.
Nombre de Dios were discussed. In 1529, Clemente Campo brought the cacique [chief] of Secativa and his family to live with him in Nombre de Dios\(^1\). This is one of the few cases we know about natives living among the Spanish, and might explain the existence of these few prehispanic fragments.

Furthermore, it is necessary to remember that our study focused on the center of the town where the native presence would not be as strong as in residential areas. If, like Deagan (1987) and McEwan (1995) proposed, Spanish settlements with predominantly Spanish male populations have intercultural households, future research in sixteenth century residential areas of Nombre de Dios could reveal more evidence of Local Fino and Prehispanic fragments.

Finally, the third type of regionally produced material is Panamanian majolica. Majolica is a tin-enamed ceramic developed in Europe in the thirteenth century. It is characterized by the addition of tin oxide to clear lead glazes in order to create an opaque white glaze (Jamieson 2001). The intention of the majolicas is to resemble Chinese porcelain. Many early Spanish and New World majolicas replicated the Chinese designs found on porcelain. However, these designs were slowly replaced with Renaissance and Hispanic-American motifs.

The Panamanian majolica is easily recognizable because of its red-brick color paste and its stylistic homogeneity (Rovira 2001). The production of majolica in Panama started at the end of the sixteenth century and ended with the abandonment of Panama City in 1671. *Panama Liso* is one of five types produced in the city and,

\(^1\) ANP Simancas, Descubrimientos, Tierra Firme. Informaciones de servicios de descubridores y pobladores de tierra firme. Años 1514 a 1652. Informacion de servicios de Clemente de Campo que paso con Pedrarias Davila en 1514 a tierra firme padeció muchos trabajos y fue de los primeros pobladores de la ciudad del Nombre de Dios en donde edificó muchas casas. Nombre de Dios 19 julio 1529
according to the evidence found in Panama La Vieja, it was the first type produced. Five fragments of *Panama Liso* were found in Nombre de Dios.

*Panama Liso* is characterized by thick, white to greenish, tin enamel (Long 1967). *Platos* are the only form identified in this type; additionally, the lack of decoration evokes *Columbia Liso* [*Columbia Plain*] *platos*. Lister and Lister (1978), Rovira (1997, 2001), and Jamieson (2001) have identified fragments of Panamanian majolica in many Spanish colonies on the Pacific coast of South America; however, until now only two places in the Caribbean reported these ceramics, the Atocha shipwreck in Florida, and Cartagena, Colombia. Furthermore, the Caribbean evidence dates to the seventeenth century, the fragments from Nombre de Dios are the only evidence of Panamanian majolica in the sixteenth-century Caribbean.

The existence of these fragments in Nombre de Dios is an interesting fact since the peak of production of Panamanian majolica was in the seventeenth century and there is no evidence of Panamanian majolicas in Portobelo, the port that replaced Nombre de Dios. Beatriz Rovira initially explained the absence of Panamanian majolicas in Portobelo through its easy access to European products (Rovira 1992); however, Rovira recognized that this argument does not explain the absence of these materials in areas of lower economic status (Rovira 2001). However, the economic role of Portobelo and the amount of European merchandise moving through the port was larger than the merchandise moving through Nombre de Dios in the sixteenth century. The acquisition of foreign merchandise was possibly open to most of the Spanish American population living in Portobelo. The existence of forts and buildings such as *La Aduana* [*Customs House*] are evidence of the larger amounts of wealth in Portobelo in contrast to Nombre de Dios. Thus, the existence of *Panama*
Lisa in Nombre de Dios can be explained by the monetary discrepancy between Portobelo and Nombre de Dios.

There were other centers of production of majolica in the New World such as Puebla, Cartagena, and Lima. However, most of them initiated their production at the end of the sixteenth century as a result of increasing regulations in trade, and the rising demand for European products. Trade regulations also restricted the provisioning of the colonies so that all the merchandise was channeled through Seville. These actions increased the economic power of the merchants of Seville, who wanted to ensure that the majority of exported ceramics were of Sevillian production (Deagan 1987). The dominance of Spanish ceramics is evident when 98.3% of the foreign material found in Nombre de Dios is of Spanish origin (Figure 5.32).

Three different production techniques have been found among Spanish ceramics: coarse earthenwares, lead-glazed earthenwares, and tin-enamed earthenwares. The Muslim presence in Spain highly influenced the Spanish ceramic production. After the expulsion of Muslims from Spain at the end of the fifteenth century, the Spanish rejection of Moorish traditions was reflected in changes in ceramic shapes and decorations. At the same time, ceramics reflected the influence of Renaissance and Italian artisans. The change in ceramic traditions of Spanish ceramics can be observed in early Spanish colonies in America, including Nombre de Dios, where the foreign ceramics found were produced between the fifteenth and sixteenth century (Table 5.6).
Moorish tradition ceramics include earthenwares and majolicas. *Naranja Micaceo* and *Feldespato Incluido* are the earthenwares usually found in Spanish colonies dating from the sixteenth century, including Nombre de Dios. These two types are non-glazed earthenwares with mica temper evident on both surfaces unless there is an orange/red slip. Although Naranja Micaceo and Feldespato Incluido are usually considered two types (Deagan 1987, 1995), the evidence from Nombre de Dios and Cartagena shows that the only significant difference is the presence of feldspar inclusions. Both types are contemporaneous and in both types the forms reported so far are *platos* and *tazas* [cups]. Thus, further study is necessary to determinate if there are two different types or if it is just a decoration variation of the...
same type. The vessels with feldspar decorations are complemented with incise geometric designs. In addition, zoomorphic shapes have been reported but they are not attached to any vessel, and it is not obvious what role they played in the ceramics forms (Figure 5.33).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ceramic Type</th>
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<th>Production date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bizcocho</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1500-1550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Porcelain</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>1550-1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia Liso [Columbia Plain]</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1490-1650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia Liso variedad verde-blanco [Columbia Plain Green Dipped]</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1490-1655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Morro</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1550-1700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faenza Policromo, Compendario [Faenza Polychrome, Compendiario]</td>
<td>Faenza, Italy</td>
<td>1550-1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Isabela Policromo [Isabela Polychrome]</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1490-1580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liguria Azul sobre Azul [Ligurian Blue on Blue]</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1550-1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liguria Azul sobre Blanco [Ligurian Blue on White]</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1550-1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melado</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1490-1550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naranja Micaceo/Feldespato incluido [Orange Micaceous/Feldspar-inlaid]</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1500-1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama Liso [Panama Plain]</td>
<td>Panama City</td>
<td>1575-1650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redware</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1500-1750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Elena Mottled</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1500-1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santo Domingo</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1550-1630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1530-1650</td>
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<td>1550-1630</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1550-1630</td>
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<td>Spain (Seville?)</td>
<td>1550-1630?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yayal</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1490-1626</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6: Origin and dates of foreign ceramic types found in Nombre de Dios (Sources: Goggin 1968, Deagan 1987, Deagan and Cruxent 2002, Therrien et al 2002)
Another earthenware found in Nombre de Dios was Redware. A brick-red paste with mineral temper characterizes this type. Although Redware has been found in many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century colonies, its origin is still under discussion. Elpidio Ortega proposed it was locally produced in Santo Domingo (Ortega 1980 in Deagan 1987); however, the presence of this type in many Spanish colonies such as La Isabela, Nueva Cadiz, Caparra, and Nombre de Dios questions this origin and suggests a possible Iberian production. Although this type has been reported in large quantities in other sixteenth-century Spanish colonies, only 22 fragments were found in Nombre de Dios.

Although lead-glazed earthenwares (a.k.a. vitreos) are difficult to date, relate to specific ceramic traditions, and assign origin because of their continual production from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, two lead-glazed earthenwares have been recognized as of Moorish tradition based on the dates of the sites where they were found. *Verde Morisco* and Melado are ceramic types that are only found in Spanish colonies dating before 1550. *Verde Morisco* has a cream to light orange paste with an
emerald lead-glazed surface. In contrast, Melado ware has a honey to mustard brown lead-glazed surface with the same cream to reddish paste (Deagan 1987). The usual forms found are kitchen utility and tablewares such as bowls, cantimplora, and candleholders. Additionally, escudillas, platos, saucers, and jars are found in Melado. Of the consumption-related lead-glazed earthenwares, 14.31% are Verde Morisco and Melado. The other 85.68% of the lead-glazed consumption wares in Nombre de Dios are El Morro.

El Morro is characterized by a red paste and granular surface (Figure 5.34). It has been reported in many other sixteenth century Caribbean colonies such as El Morro- Puerto Rico, Cartagena, Puerto Real, Nueva Cadiz, and St. Augustine (Deagan 1987). Its extensive presence in the Caribbean suggests an Iberian origin. At the end of the sixteenth century, New World colonies such as Mexico initiated production of similar types that were exported to other colonies. However, the fragments found in Nombre de Dios follow the characteristics of the Iberian type.

Of all the Spanish ceramics for consumption (2,676 fragments), 59.64% is majolica, and 72.30% is of Moorish tradition. Majolica has been accredited to Muslims who apparently introduced this technique to Spain in the thirteenth century (Lister 1983). After the Muslim expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula, this technique continued to be used in the following centuries by Sevillian artisans.
Figure 5.34: El Morro fragments found in Nombre de Dios.

Five types of majolica from Moorish tradition were found in Nombre de Dios: Columbia Plain, Yayal, Santo Domingo, Isabela Policromo, and Santa Elena Mottled. Majolicas are porous pottery with a soft paste but hard surface (Goggin 1968). The Moorish tradition majolicas tend to have a white to grayish background. Their decoration varies from nothing to bands (e.g. Yayal) to floral designs (e.g. Santo Domingo, Isabela policromo). The usual forms for these types are platos [brimmed concave plates], escudillas [carinated bowls], tazas [handless cups] and jars (Figure 5.35). These types have been found in Caribbean colonies from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries such as La Isabela, Puerto Real, Santa Maria La Antigua del Darien, and Cartagena. The forms and decorations are constant throughout its production.

The expulsion of Muslims from Spain and the arrival of Italian potters to Seville changed the production of majolicas. The ceramic type Sevilla blanco [Sevilla White] reflects this transition. The vessels are characterized by a white tin-enameded surface with some molded decorations. Some of the handles remind us of Columbia Liso’s bowl handles (Figure 5.35). The enamel is thicker, whiter, and
Figure 5.35: Moorish tradition majolicas from Nombre de Dios. From left to right, top: *Columbia Liso* bowl handles; *Columbia Liso* candlestick?; *Columbia Liso variedad verde-blanco* small plate. Second row: *Yayal* bowl; *Santo Domingo* fragments. Third row: *Santa Elena Mottled* jar handle; *Santo Domingo* fragment? Bottom: *Isabela Policromo* plato; *Sevilla blanco* bowl handles.
glossier than Columbia Liso ceramics, sharing more characteristics with Italian majolicas than Moorish.

Three additional majolicas of Italian tradition were found in Nombre de Dios. *Sevilla Azul sobre Blanco* is an extension of *Sevilla Blanco*, the difference relies on the use of blue cobalt to decorate the vessels. This decoration is more refined than the Moorish tradition ceramic types (Figure 5.36). This ceramic has been reported only in Mexico City and Concepción de La Vega (Deagan 1987).

The most common type of Italian tradition majolica found in Spanish colonies is *Sevilla Azul sobre Azul* (Figure 5.37). The enamel of this type is a mix of tin and cobalt, which gives a blue background to all the designs which are usually drawn with a darker blue (Deagan and Cruxent 2002). The design motifs are varied from human faces to animals and plants. It is very characteristic to find arches on the exterior of the vessels. Of this type the most common form found are platos, though shallow bowls and tazas have also been reported.

Although the most common fragments found are limited to blue decorations, two varieties are proposed for Sevilla Azul sobre Azul: *variedad amarilla* and *variedad blanca*. The *variedad amarilla* has been reported in Cartagena (Therrien et

![Figure 5.36: Sevilla Azul sobre Blanco fragments from Nombre de Dios.](image-url)
al 2002), Mexico City (Lister and Lister 1982), and now Nombre de Dios. This variety consists of the addition of yellow lines to the usual design of Sevilla Blue on Blue (Figure 5.38). The yellow paint is overglazed, a characteristic shared with the second proposed variety.

To date, the *variedad blanca* has not been reported in any other Spanish colony but 21 fragments were found in Nombre de Dios with overglazed white paint designs complementing the usual blue floral designs (Figure 5.39). The amount of fragments found to the moment creates the need to further study this type and establish more concrete characteristics for this variety.
The last majolica type of Italian tradition identified in Nombre de Dios is Talavera. This type follows the same characteristics of the Sevillian types except for the decoration. The motifs are floral, animal, and human figures, but the colors used are blue, manganese (purple), and yellow (Figure 5.40). This type was originally produced in Talavera de La Reina, which reached its peak as a center of pottery production in the middle of the sixteenth century. Talaveran potters were influenced by Italian potters as well as potters from Seville and Flanders (Deagan 1987). Talavera produced high-quality majolica, which was copied throughout Spain and the New World during the seventeenth century. Fragments of this type have been reported in Cartagena and Villa de Leyva, Colombia, Santo Domingo, and now Nombre de Dios.
Figure 5.39: *Sevilla azul sobre azul variedad blanco plato* fragments from Nombre de Dios.

Figure 5.40: Talavera policromo bowl found in Nombre de Dios.
Although Spain became a large producer of majolica, Italian majolica was still imported to Spanish colonies. The inventory of Juana María Destrada from 1583, presented in Chapter IV (Table 4.1), listed 33 platos and porcelains from Pisa. Two types of Italian majolicas were found in Nombre de Dios: Liguria and Faenza. Liguria was a known center of production of Italian majolica. Although this ceramic type resembles Sevilla Azul sobre Azul, the difference in quality distinguished these two types. Liguria Azul sobre Azul is more homogeneous in its buff color paste, and its designs are more elaborated and precise than the Sevillian ceramic (Figure 5.41). Fragments of this type have been reported in Mexico City, Concepcion de La Vega, and Santo Domingo. The difficulty to distinguish Sevilla Azul sobre Azul and Liguria Azul sobre Azul can be the cause for the small number of reports of its presence in the New World. Only a couple of Ligurian fragments were recovered from ligurian; a reminder of the exclusivity of Spanish-produced merchandise in transatlantic trade between Spain and its colonies.

Figure 5.41: Fragments of Liguria Azul sobre Azul found in Nombre de Dios.
The second Italian majolica found comes from Faenza, which was a large Italian majolica producer since the fifteenth century. During the second half of the century, Faenza potters produced a high-quality white majolica with polychrome designs called compendario. The compendario style was a loose painting style consisting of coats of arms, animal, and floral motifs. This majolica was associated with high social status because it was linked with the Medici and other ruling families in Italy (Prie Museum 2005). From the 28 fragments of Faenza, only two were identified as compendario (Figure 5.42), while the rest are just plain white fragments. The presence of Faenza compendario in the New World has only been reported in Mexico City.

In addition to majolicas, stoneware and Chinese porcelain fragments were found. The presence of stoneware fragments in sixteenth century Spanish colonies is very scarce. Only six fragments have been found in the site so far; however,
they are diagnostic allowing the identification of forms (Figure 5.43). English and German potters manufactured brown stoneware ceramics. Although they are both salt glazed over brown oxide engobe, variations in their paste and decoration are the main differences between the two (Noël Hume 2001). The fragments found in Nombre de Dios are of German origin, possibly Rhineland. The singularity of these vessels allows the easy identification of the fragments, which are part of graybeard jugs.

Rhineland stoneware potters entered the bottle business to fulfill the need of shipping bottles without using compartment caskets or wicker casings. Graybeard, Bartmanns, or Bellarmines are jugs with a molded face on the neck. The features of the face appeared to change over time. Ivor Noël Hume proposed the early graybeard jugs with a well-defined portrait mask are earlier than the caricature-like (Noël Hume

Figure 5.43: Rhenish stoneware fragments of graybeard jugs found in Nombre de Dios.
The production of graybeard jugs initiated around 1540 and the bearded face was still applied until 1767.

The last foreign ceramics found in Nombre de Dios, and possibly used for food consumption was Chinese porcelain. Only 18 fragments were recovered; however, this should not be a surprise because large quantities of porcelain did not come to America until 1573. Linda Rosenfeld Pomper, an art historian who studies Chinese porcelain of early Spanish colonies in America, was able to date some of the fragments recovered in Nombre de Dios. Pomper suggested that porcelain is not likely to arrive to America before 1573 because of trade regulations (Rosenfeld Pomper, personal communication 2007). The date of the identified fragments also suggests the end of the sixteenth century as the arrival date of porcelain in Nombre de Dios. However, the presence of Chinese porcelain could also indicate the existence of illegal trading networks. Ceramics such as stoneware were not supposed to be in Spanish colonies; however, fragments were found in Nombre de Dios. Therefore, it will not be out of the ordinary if Chinese porcelain was also part of smuggled products since they were desired goods. Kathleen Deagan suggests that porcelain probably reached Spanish colonies as early as 1550 through illicit trade with the Portuguese (Deagan 1987).

The identification of the Chinese porcelain fragments by Pomper suggests most of the sherds are kraak porcelain. Kraak porcelain is characterized by a rim divided into panels and sometimes molded. The thickness of the body and the blue shades in the decoration may vary (Figure 5.44). At least three fragments were identified to possibly be from the second half of the sixteenth century, and one from the Jiajing period (1522-1566).
The diversity of the assemblage of ceramics related to food consumption reflects the high demand of European products for display in domestic spaces. In addition to ceramic vessels, glassware played an important role in table displays. Glasswares were valued objects in Spanish colonies; the fragility of these objects limited their presence in early sixteenth century Spanish settlements in America. From the 385 fragments of glass found, only 23 were identified as glasswares.

Venetian glassmakers have been known to create high quality glassware, hence its popularity among Spanish nobility in the sixteenth century. The demand for high quality glass led to the creation of centers of production in Spain. During the sixteenth century, Catalonia and Castile were the two most well-known glassmaking centers in Spain. Andalusia, Valencia and Majorca were also glass producers, but their production was limited. The fragments found in American colonies have been commonly credited to Catalonia because Andalusian and Castilian glass was of inferior quality and for everyday use (Page and Doménech 2004). However, craftsmen like Juan Rodriguez in Seville [Andalusia province] who claimed...
knowledge of the latticinio (a.k.a. lattimo) technique apparently manufactured latticino glass in the sixteenth century. This production in Seville questions the Catalan origins of imported glass to America. Venetian-style glass in Spain was characterized by applications and ornamental techniques such as latticinio, enameling and engraving. The applications on this type of glass consisted of ear-shaped handles sometimes twisted (Figure 5.45).

Latticinio is a combination of white and clear glass forming a design, usually stripes and twists. This technique was developed in Murano and spread to Spain in the sixteenth century. Deagan suggests that latticinio glass found in colonies dating to the first half of the sixteenth century is Venetian because latticinio glass was only popular in Spain after the second half of the sixteenth century (Deagan 1987). However, Jutta-Annette Page proposes that the difference between Venetian and Catalan latticinio glass is determined by the manufacture technique used. Venetian glass applied opaque white glass in the forming process while Catalan glass

Figure 5.45: Examples of Catalan ornamental glass handles from Nombre de Dios.
applied opaque white glass to the surface as vertical or spiral lines smoothed into the
glass or as canes in high relief (Page and Doménech 2004). Fourteen fragments of
latticinio glass were identified from both Catalonia and Venetia according to the
difference in techniques proposed by Page. Additionally, two fragments have an
addition of cobalt blue in their design (Figure 5.46). These fragments appear to be of
Venetian origin, not only because of the integration of white opaque in the body of
the vessel, but also because the addition of a third component is a sign of high control
of the technique. There are no samples of engraved and enameled glass found in
Nombre de Dios.

Another distinctive sixteenth-century ornamental glassware is opaque red
glass. This glass appears to be produced in Venetia sometime between 1500 and
1610 because it is not present in seventeenth century shipwrecks (Deagan 1987).
Only a few fragments have been recovered in American colonies; however, the
characteristics of the pieces suggest a decorative purpose. The vessels are thin

Figure 5.46: Examples of latticinio glass from Nombre de Dios. Top: fragments possibly of
Catalonian origin, observe the high relief white glass line. Bottom: Venetian glass. Right:
latticinio glass with inclusions of cobalt. Possibly of Venetian origin.
opaque red glass, sometimes with shades of darker red. The handle fragments found in Nombre de Dios are similar to ones found in Nueva Cadiz, Panama Vieja, the Dominican Republic, and Florida (Figure 5.47).

Among the glassware forms identified in Nombre de Dios are goblets and/or possibly footed stands (a.k.a. salvilla), drinking glasses, and vases (Figure 5.47). Goblets and footed stands were produced during the sixteenth century in Catalonia. Both forms are composed of three parts: bowl, stem, and base. Deagan has described the goblets found in Spanish colonies with short stems (Deagan 1987); however, it is necessary to undertake a detailed study of the characteristics of goblets and footed stands to consider the length of a stem as a determinant of form. For the moment, the only part that determines the form is the bowl. Goblets have fluted or cylindrical bowls, sometimes with ear-shaped loop handles on the lower part of the bowl. In contrast, footed stands a have slightly concave or flat bowl with a rim in order to display food or objects on the table (Page and Doménech 2004). The third form identified is from fragments donated to the project by a collector. These fragments are from a tumbler or drinking glass. It appears to be Andalusian because of its green and yellowish tonality and its texture surface is created by twists, ridges, or molded

Figure 5.47: Red glass fragments from Nombre de Dios. Notice the handle on the left image.
patterns. Finally, vases were also used on the table. However, the large variety, as well as similarities among the vases produced in Catalonia and Andalusia, result in a difficult identification of the fragments found in Nombre de Dios (Figure 5.48).

In addition to glass vases, ceramic vases were commonly used. Although vases could be found manufactured in almost any ceramic type, Bizcocho was the only ceramic type in Nombre de Dios with a vase. Bizcocho is a Moorish tradition coarse earthenware characterized by thin walls and a cream-colored paste similar to that of majolica but without tin enamel (Deagan and Cruxent 2002). There is little information about this ceramic type but it has been identified in Spanish colonies established before 1550. The forms identified for this type are pitchers, platos, and vases with incised and molded decorations. The only form identified in Nombre de Dios is a jarroncito [small vase] (Figure 5.49). The fragility of these vessels suggests they were ornamental more than utilitarian.

The large variety of products found in the archaeological survey reflects the role played by Nombre de Dios in the Spanish commercial network. Although it is currently impossible to determine if the residents of Nombre de Dios used all the products described, we know the diversity of products they had access to. The almost total absence of local manufactured products suggests that the colonist had easy access to the preferred European products. Future research can confirm or reject the general use of European products by the large majority of European settlers in Nombre de Dios through the study of residential areas far from the center of the town.
Figure 5.48: Glass fragments from Nombre de Dios. Top: goblet stems and/or footed stands. Middle: green tumbler fragments; ornament from a vase. Bottom: ornamental handles from vases; unknown cobalt blue glass fragment with incisions.
Artifacts for Medicinal and Non-Kitchen Purposes

One of the concerns continually expressed in archival documents was the health condition of the residents of Nombre de Dios and the travelers passing through (Mena Garcia 1984, Otte 1988). Thus, the presence of illness should be reflected in the archaeological record not only in the presence of artifacts related to medicine, but also artifacts related to hygiene. The Spanish ceramics traditionally associated with sanitary activities are green lead-glazed earthenwares or *Vidriado Verde*, which are very common in Spanish colonial assemblages. Its paste varies from buff to pink color and its surface is emerald green (Figure 5.50). The vessels are usually large vessels such as *lebrillos* [milk pans], *bacines* [chamber pots], mortars, *platos*, and *escudillas*. However, only lebrillos and bacines were identified in Nombre de Dios. This type has been reported in many sixteenth-century colonies but not in post-
sixteenth century periods, suggesting that they were manufactured in Spain between 1490 and 1600 (Deagan 1987).

On the other hand, *Caparra Azul* has been closely related to medicinal activities because the only form reported has been the *albarello*, a drug jar widely used by the Spanish. Caparra Azul vessels are characterized by an interior white and a dark blue exterior tin-enameled surface similar to Sevillian majolicas (Figure 5.51). *Caparra Azul* has been reported in most of the sixteenth century Spanish colonies. Deagan suggests a chronological range of 1492 to 1600 for this type. She also suggests that late sixteenth century albarello could be produced in the New World, specifically in Panama City. Even though Panama City was closer to Nombre de Dios, all the *albarello* fragments found in the port are of Iberian origin.

In addition to albarellos, glass vials were also used for pharmaceutical purposes. Vials were exported from Spain and are found in colonies dating from the first half of the sixteenth century (Deagan 1987). Twenty-one fragments were found
in Nombre de Dios. They are tall and cylindrical small containers with restricted necks and bulbous or everted rims (Fig 4.52). The glass is usually different shades of green or blue (Appendix 2 Table 1.3). This description coincides with the description of Hispanic vials dating between 1500-1550 provided by Deagan (1987).

Even though the artifacts associated with medicine and sanitation seem to be few, they reflect the health issues faced by the inhabitants of Nombre de Dios. Furthermore, glass vials are seldom found in sixteenth-century settlements because of their fragility and because albarellos can carry out the same functions as the vials. In any case, the presence of vials and albarellos suggest that, to some degree, illness was a regular problem faced in Nombre de Dios as the archival documents described.

Figure 5.51: Albarello fragment from Nombre de Dios.
Leisure, Clothing, and Personal Ornaments

Life in Nombre de Dios was not limited to subsistence and commercial activities. Leisure times were important in the life of European colonizers. Some of the artifacts found in Nombre de Dios related to leisure activities include parts of gambling games, which were prohibited in Spain since the thirteenth century. Even though the gambling prohibition was general, it was expressly directed towards women and priests. Thus, gambling was a traditional male activity transferred to American colonies. Deagan suggests that government officials monopolized gaming houses in America (Deagan 1987). It would not be surprising to find gambling in towns such as Nombre de Dios where most of the population was male and had a lot of free time between arrivals of the Spanish fleets.

Board and table games were popular among Spanish. Evidence found in Nombre de Dios suggests that games such as backgammon, checkers, and parchisi
were probably played. A ceramic disc found in Nombre de Dios made of a botija fragment has the same characteristics as other discs found around the Caribbean (Figure 5.53). Deagan has suggested these were gaming pieces for games such as checkers and backgammon.

The second evidence of gambling in Nombre de Dios is an aqua glass die. Dice games were perhaps more popular than board games among the Spaniards because of the smaller quantity of gaming pieces needed. The presence of dice has been reported in many of the American colonies (Deagan 1987); however, they are made of bone. A Panamanian collector showed us another dice from Nombre de Dios, this dice is made of bone and of smaller size (Figure 5.54). The two different kinds of dice found so far in Nombre de Dios suggest that they were importing dice as well as making them locally.

The last evidence of gambling in the town was found in faunal remains. The identification of at least one cock suggests that cock fighting could be another activity in Nombre de Dios. The existence of a gaming house cannot be discarded for now.

Figure 5.53: Ceramic gaming piece found in Nombre de Dios.
However, the small quantity of gaming pieces reported so far suggests that they were used for domestic or sporadic entertainment. Except for inventories, the archival record does not give many details about gambling. Playing cards are the only gambling objects present in the records.

In addition to gambling, lace making was perhaps another activity practiced in Nombre de Dios. Spanish women have been known to manufacture high quality and delicate lace. This tradition already existed in the sixteenth century and it was exported to American colonies. One of the most well-known Spanish lace making techniques is the *encaje de bolillos* [bobbin or pillow lace]. This technique consists of interweaving the threads rolled in bobbins. As the lace is being woven, the lace is held by pins stuck in a pillow. The place of the pins is determined by a pattern drawn on a paper attached to the pillow (Figure 5.55).

The Spanish bobbins or bolillos were called *majaderuelos* or *majaderillos* because their shape is similar to a pestle, in Spanish called *mano*. Spanish bobbins were made of *boj*, a Spanish bush known for its compact and hard yellow wood.
However, the fragments found in American colonies are made of bone or ivory. The two fragments found in Nombre de Dios are made of bone.

Straight pins were not only used in lace making but to hold fabric together during tailoring and to fasten clothing (Deagan 1987). These uses could explain the finding of a bundle of 134 pins in one test unit. The pins found are copper alloy with wound heads with an average length of 3 cms (Figure 5.56). Deagan suggests that the length of straight pins varied according to their function, "smaller pins were needed for dressmaking and tailoring, particularly with light or fine fabrics. Larger pins were used to hold head dressings, veils, clothing pleats, and folds in place" (Deagan 1987: 194).

To complete the sewing artifacts found in Nombre de Dios, four thimbles were found around the site. During the sixteenth century, Nuremberg was the production center for thimbles imported to Spain and its colonies. Nuremberg thimble makers developed a technique to produce pure zinc, which made it easy to work with alloy sheet brass to manufacture thimbles. Nuremberg thimbles are lightweight with a consistent thickness. Their regularity allowed variations in their
shapes and decorations. Some thimbles had decorative bands and in some cases, maker's marks. The thimbles found in Nombre de Dios follow these characteristics (Figure 5.57).

The archival documents from Nombre de Dios continually mention chests with fabrics as part of the inventories from merchant houses in town. Even though there are artifacts relating to lace-making and sewing, there is no evidence to suggest
the presence of a tailor in town. Few artifacts related to clothing were recovered. However, an aglet was recovered in Nombre de Dios, and a collector donated two more to the archaeological collection. Aglets are copper alloy rolled plates used to enclose the end of laces, which were used to fasten clothing during most of the sixteenth century in Spanish colonies. Aglets have been found in many sixteenth century contexts more often than buttons. Buttons have been scarcely found in sixteenth century contexts.

Collectors have reported three copper alloy buttons, but only one button was recovered during the archaeological survey (Figure 5.58). However, the button recovered is made of ivory with a round shape and two eyes. This is the only button with these characteristics reported so far for the sixteenth century. They are usually one piece metal or glass buttons, used primarily by military men (Deagan 1987). Most buttons from the sixteenth century are made of metal or glass.

In addition to the buttons previously described, one of the artifact collectors in Panama provided a ceramic button (Figure 5.58). This button is made from a fragment of Sevilla Azul sobre Azul which was rounded and perforated with two eyes. Its shape resembles the gaming pieces described above. This is a one of a kind artifact reported so far, and it is a perfect example of secondary use of pottery.

The last type of object possibly related to clothing is cascabeles [rumble bells]. Cascabeles were used in different contexts. They could adorn clothing, but they could also be part of a horse harness, doorbells, or amulets, among other functions. Deagan suggests that the Spanish probably used cascabeles as amulets. The shape of bells does not vary radically according to their functions, making it difficult, if not impossible, to suggest their specific use. However, the bells used as amulets were usually made of silver and tend to be smaller than the ones used in
harness. Two cascabeles were found in the archaeological survey and they are both copper alloy. Both cascabeles present characteristics of the Clarksdale bells. They are around 2.7 cms in diameter with a protuberance in the middle where the two halves composing the body are joined (Figure 5.58). They also have two round holes joined by a slit in the bottom. Clarksdale bells have been found in many sixteenth-century American colonies (Deaga 1987).

Besides cascabeles, other objects more frequently used for personal adornment were found at Nombre de Dios. Beads and bracelets were commonly used among Spanish. There were a large variety of glass beads imported during the sixteenth century; however, Deagan suggests that these imports occurred only before 1580. In late sixteenth century archaeological contexts, there is a scarcity of beads as a result of the rising power of the church. The stylistic austerity of the church led to the decline of production and importation of distinctive beads. The ostentatious beads were replaced by simple bone or wood beads used mainly for rosaries (Deagan

Figure 5.58: Clothing pieces from Nombre de Dios. Left: Copper aglet. Top row, left to right: gilded buttons; ball shaped button. Bottom row: Ivory button found in archaeological survey; ceramic button showed by collector. Right: copper alloy rumble bell.
During the archaeological survey in Nombre de Dios, 181 beads were collected and classified in nine types (Appendix 2 Tables 2.3 and 2.4). However, it is not possible to determine if they are from the beginning or middle of the century until the chronology for Nombre de Dios is refined.

Nueva Cadiz and Chevron are the most abundant beads found in the collection. Nueva Cadiz beads are called after the colonial site of Nueva Cadiz, Venezuela. They are two layered glass beads with a square shape and a smooth surface. The interior layer is white and the exterior is usually turquoise or navy blue. Their length is approximately 3 cm. A variety of this type is Nueva Cadiz twisted (Figure 5.59). Deagan suggests that Nueva Cadiz beads may be Iberian, based on their absence in non-Spanish American colonies. However, attempts to trace their origins to Spain have been unsuccessful (Deagan 1987). Three varieties of Nueva Cadiz beads were found in Nombre de Dios. Fifty-seven were Nueva Cadiz Plain turquoise, nineteen were navy blue, and eleven were twisted. Many of the beads are melted, possibly due to fires in the town, which would coincide with the chronology proposed for these beads (Figure 5.59).

The other group of beads most commonly found is Chevron, also called Rosette in the sixteenth century. Multiple layers of red, blue, and white characterize Chevron beads. It has been proposed that sixteenth-century Chevron beads usually have seven layers, while beads dating to later centuries have fewer layers (Deagan 1987). Two types of Chevron beads were found in Nombre de Dios. Eighty-four beads were Chevron tube which are striped and non-faceted and with a similar length to Nueva Cadiz beads. Only six beads are faceted Chevron. These beads are smaller that the previous types with an average length of 70 mm. From the other beads found
in Nombre de Dios, two beads stand out, a plain agate glass bead, and a clear faceted glass bead. However, similar examples were not found in other colonies, and the information regarding sixteenth century beads is limited (Figure 5.59).

In addition to glass beads, a glass ring and a metal medal were found. Glass is not a suitable material for rings because of its fragility. Catherine Johns suggests that black, purple, brown, or blue glass rings were intended to resemble jet, a black form of lignite that takes a brilliant polish and is often used in jewelry (Johns 1996). Similar rings existed in Roman Britain jewelry many centuries before the colonization of America. Thus, it is possible that rings were among all the objects manufactured by glassmakers in the sixteenth century.

Religious images and crucifixes were widely used in Spanish colonies. During the archaeological excavations, one brass medal of the image of the Virgin Mary was found. Devotional medals from the sixteenth century have been reported from shipwrecks in the Caribbean but not from excavated sites (Deagan 1987). Religious medals were more popular in the seventeenth century and afterward. In the archaeological survey, crucifixes were not found. A collector from Panama provided the only examples of crucifixes from Nombre de Dios, one made of bone and one made of shell. Even though it is not possible to confirm their origins and chronology, inventories of personal possessions list crucifixes made of quartz, and rosaries brought from Mexico (Appendix 1, Document 2 and 5).

The articles just described, related to leisure and personal ornament, provide a more complete image of the inhabitants of the town. The small quantities of objects found—such as a medal, a ring, a die, and so on—suggest that they were individual ownerships and not part of shipments. Thus, Spanish traditional activities such as
Figure 5.59: Glass beads and ring from Nombre de Dios. Top, left to right: Nueva Cadiz Plain turquoise; Nueva Cadiz Plain navy; Nueva Cadiz Twisted turquoise. Notice some of the beads are melted. Middle: Chevron tube with blue and white striped exterior; red, white, and blue faceted Chevron. Bottom: Agate plain round bead; clear faceted glass bead; black glass ring.
gambling and lace making were practiced in the town and probably intensified during
the trade fairs when the town was massively populated.

5.5 *Artifacts for Commercial and Military Use*

The activities more intensively practiced in Nombre de Dios were
commercial. The foundation of the port served as a transitory point for merchandise.
Transportation of products is best represented by the containers used to store goods
during transatlantic and transisthmic journeys. Traditionally, the artifacts associated
with transportation of products in the sixteenth century are *botijas* or olive jars. Olive
jar is the term usually used in colonial Spanish studies undertaken by North American
archaeologists; however, this term is problematic because it suggests this ceramic
type refers only to vessels used to transport olives and olive oil while archival records
and archaeological evidence suggests the opposite. Thus, I will use the term *botija*
based on the term used in the archival documents to refer to these vessels.

*Botijas* are amphora-shaped commercial containers widely used before
Columbus’ arrival to America in 1492. The unique shape of these vessels suggests
that they are descendants of a Mediterranean pottery tradition (Goggin 1968).
Although they have been recovered in French, English, and Portuguese
archaeological contexts, these vessels were primarily produced and used by the
Spanish during the colonization of America (James 1988). George Avery studied
botijas used by the *Carrera de Indias* to transport wine. Although wine production
centers were Cazalla and Jerez, studies of botija fragments reveal that the vessels
were manufactured in areas close to the Guadalquivir River, especially Seville (Avery
1997).
Botijas were used to transport liquids and grains. For example, the appraisal guide from 1565 lists the importation of honey and lard in botijas (Appendix 1 Document 5). It has been suggested that there is a direct relation between the presence or absence of a lead-glazed body and the botijas' function. Based on a sample of over 600 complete botijas from two shipwrecks in the Dominican Republic dating from the second half of the eighteenth century, Stephen James determined that only unglazed botijas contained the remains of their original contents, which were usually pitch or olive pits (James 1988). It has been suggested that glazed types were used for liquids such as wine, while the unglazed botijas were used for thicker liquids such as honey, lard, tar, and soap, or grains such as chickpeas and peas. Botijas were not only used to transport these merchandises by sea but also by mule (Goggin 1968, James 1988, Marken 1994, Deagan and Cruxent 2002, Arduengo 2008).

Botijas have not been found in American archaeological sites predating 1502 (Deagan and Cruxent 2002), but their use increased when trade between Europe and America intensified. Depending on their surface, some of these shipping containers could be easily reused. The Spanish used glazed jars to insure that they could be reused. Unglazed jars could not be cleaned due to their small neck diameters. Shipwrecks found close to Cuba suggest that ships traveling to Spain carried products from the New World in botijas (James 1988). Since not all the botijas were reused, the demand for large containers to transport merchandise to Spain led to the production of botijas in some American colonies like Cartagena (Therrien et al 2002) and Cuba (Arduengo 2008) after the second half of the seventeenth century.

Over the centuries, the function of botijas has changed far less than their form. Botija shapes are well suited for storage and shipboard transport in rough waters. Mitchell Marken explains that “their rounded form maximizes structural integrity and
their incurvate sides fit nicely against a curving hull. The small opening makes for an
easy closure with minimal airspace” (Marken 1994: 43). Although their shape was
ideal for transatlantic travel, the jars lost their amphora-like handles, had slight
changes in their elongation, and varied in size. Marken suggests the changes in shape
and size of botijas during the colonization period is due to the increasing migration
and colonization of the New World. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, trade
was directed to small colonial outposts, while during the second half of the century, it
was intended to support the growing number of colonists. Thus, the need to deliver
homeland products to preserve European diets affected the size and quantity of botijas
used in transatlantic trade (Marken 1994).

Changes in botijas led John Goggin to propose three botija styles with
chronological implications: early (1490-1580), middle (1580-1780), and late (1780-
1850) (Goggin 1960). The early botija style differs from later styles in size, shape,
and rim (Figures 5.60 and 5.61). Although these vessels are not found in great
quantities, they have been identified in Santa Maria La Antigua del Darien (Alzate
2000), Cartagena (Therrien 2001; Therrien, Salamanca, and Lobo Guerrero 2000;
Therrien et al 2002), and Panama.

The middle and late botija styles have been found in American colonies. Both
styles diversified in shape and size as well as in their rim. Marken suggests that
forms from the middle style are the result of adaptations to oceanic trade and evolved
from existing Roman and Greek traditions. However, the assessment of this
evolution is difficult because of the lack of shipwreck examples from the first half of
the sixteenth century (Marken 1994). Additionally, Marken questions Goggin’s
sequence “it is doubtful whether three entirely new styles of jars suddenly replaced
the “Early Style” two-handled cantimplora, as has been suggested by Goggin”
Based on the existing classification, the study of botijas in Nombre de Dios was approached in two different ways: by weight and rim shape. Botija body fragments were weighed instead of counted because weight provides a more accurate number of vessels recovered since there are suggested weights for botijas based on complete vessels found in Panama Viejo. The proposed weight for early style botijas is 4 pounds, for middle style botijas 25 pounds, and for late style botijas 11.5 pounds. However, it is necessary to clarify that this method has a fault. Body fragments from botijas, except for the rims, cannot usually suggest body shape; therefore, unless the fragments are directly associated to its rim, the resulting number of vessels is a suggestion and not a fact. Based on Goggin’s classification and the occupation dates of Nombre de Dios, I will not consider the existence of late botija styles in the archaeological record. The total weight of the fragments recovered in the site is 633 pounds. If we consider the weights of early and middle style botijas the minimum number of vessels for each style is:

- Early Style: 633 Lb/ 4Lb = 158.25 vessels
- Middle Style: 633 Lb/ 25 Lb = 25.32 vessels

However, the analysis of the minimum number of vessels cannot ignore the existence of rims, which are diagnostic fragments to classify botijas. If we integrate the information produced by rims to the body fragments, it is possible to suggest a more realistic number of botijas recovered. The difference in the number of rims from the early style and middle style suggest a larger number of middle style botijas in Nombre de Dios (Table 5.7). If we apply the percentage found in the different rim
Table 5.7: Frequency of botija rims and possible number of botijas found in Nombre de Dios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Frequency of rims</th>
<th>Percentage of rims</th>
<th>Possible frequency of body fragments</th>
<th>Weight of each vessel</th>
<th>Possible number of vessels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35.80</td>
<td>226.61 Lb</td>
<td>4 Lb</td>
<td>56.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>64.19</td>
<td>406.32 Lb</td>
<td>25 Lb</td>
<td>16.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
<td>633 Lb</td>
<td></td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

styles to the total number of body fragments, the resulting number of vessels is approximately 72 botijas. The resulting number of vessels is not completely invalid if we consider that this is just the result of a sampling around the site. Additionally, Pierre and Hauguet Chaunu suggest that intensive trade did not start until the middle of the sixteenth century, until the period of 1541 to 1550 did the American mainland port of Nombre de Dios reach the 100,000 tons mark in Spanish traffic (Chaunu and Chaunu 1956).

Furthermore, it is necessary to remember that botijas were reused not only to transport New World products to Spain, but also in the construction of buildings. Avery suggests that botijas were used in vaulted ceilings and in floor structures (Avery 1994). Examples of these uses have been found in the Cathedral of Bogota, Colombia (Therrien 1994) and in Santiago, Cuba (Arduengo 2008). Darwin Arduengo found several samples of botijas buried face down on the floor covered by a layer of soil with lime, and suggests that this was a method employed to control rising humidity to floors (Arduengo 2008). Finally, ceramic fragments, not only
FIG. 4.1 Olive jar rim types: A, Type 1; B, Type 2.

FIG. 4.2 Olive jar rim types: A–B, seventeenth-century Type 3 forms with semi-triangular shapes; C, eighteenth-century Type 3 with a semicircular shape.

FIG. 4.3 Olive jar rim types: A, eighteenth-century Type 4 rim; B, seventeenth-century Type 5 rim; C, late eighteenth-century Type 6.

Figure 5.60: Top: botija rim types by botija style. (Marken 1994: 51). Bottom left: early style botija rim from Nombre de Dios. Bottom right: middle style botija rims from Nombre de Dios.
Figure 5.61: Top: Botija shapes by styles (Deagan 1987: 31). Left: Early style from Panama Viejo, Panama (http://www.panamaviejo.org/catalogo/default.asp). Right: Middle style from Cayo District, Belize dated between 1580-1600 (http://www.belize.com/articles/archaeology/spanish-olive-jar-maya-archaeology.html)
botija, were sometimes used in adobe and tapia constructions to fill in gaps in the walls; several examples of this can still be found in present-day mud constructions in Colombia.

In addition to rim and shape, stamps are considered chronological markers since they are usually found in middle style botijas. Only one of the fifty-two middle style rims found in Nombre de Dios had a mark (Figure 5.62). Based on the study of 585 botija rims from the Santo Domingo Monastery in La Antigua Guatemala, Clive Carruthers suggests that rim marks are only found in middle style. John Goggin first suggested that these marks were factory marks; however, Avery and Carruthers proposed that these marks represent the merchant or consignee instead of the manufacturer based on archival documents (Avery 1997; Carruthers 2003).

Marken has suggested that rim marks are restricted to the first half of the seventeenth century (Marken 1994); however, the presence of a rim mark in Nombre de Dios could suggest something different. It is possible that marks could have been
in use before the seventeenth century. After all, Marken himself questions the sudden changes in botija styles proposed by Goggin (Marken 1994). Perhaps marks were slowly adopted to control the increasing trade. On the other hand, the botija with the mark could be evidence of the use of the port after its official abandonment in 1597. The fragment found in Nombre de Dios was stamped. Unfortunately, at this time there is no more information available regarding the style of the stamp.

The paste used to manufacture botijas was not exclusive for these vessels. As it was previously explained, drainage canals found in Nombre de Dios had the same paste as the botijas. Moreover, orzas were found to have the same characteristics that botijas and canals. The difference lies in the rim, thickness of their body, and annular base. Their body is recognized because it has the same grooves than the olive jars but thinner walls (Figure 5.63). Orzas are small containers with a wide mouth and sometimes two handles. Their everted rim allows the container to be sealed with a cork; the same method was used to seal botijas (James 1994). The total amount of orza fragments was 72 which includes body and rim fragments.

In addition to botijas and orzas, barrels were often used to transport and store goods. Marken suggests that even though at the end of the sixteenth century there was a shortage of timber, barrels were preferred as containers more than ceramic vessels (Marken 1994). The abundance of botijas, orzas, and barrels are reminiscent of the trading function of an Atlantic port. Furthermore, the abundance of horse equipment reflects the transitory nature of Nombre de Dios.
Horseshoes are the most representative artifacts related to horse tack. Six complete horseshoes were found, all U-shaped but with variations between straight and curved branches. The nails used to attach horseshoes are between 2.5 and 5 cms, 194 of these nails were found (Table 5.3); moreover, a mass of melted horseshoe nails was found on the surface (Figure 5.64). The location of the concentration of metals is close to the cobbled patio, possibly the location of the governor’s house. According to the archives, the governor’s house was surrounded by a wall; perhaps the enclosed area was used for activities related to the mule train. Spur buckles and bit rings are also part of the horse equipment found in the survey (Appendix 2 Table 2.5).

Commercial activities in the town are also evident with the presence of precious metals, balances, and coins. An indication of commercial activities associated with precious metals is the presence of crucibles, which are containers used solely in metallurgy. This type of vessel has been found in La Isabela (Deagan
and Cruxent 2002) and Panama City. After amalgamation and refining, gold and silver was melted in crucibles. This process required strong vessels. It has been suggested that crucibles were made from animal-bone ash based on metallurgical treatises from the sixteenth century (Deagan and Cruxent 2002). Three fragments were found in Nombre de Dios, all of them from the same excavation. The three fragments found are bases between two and three cms of diameter (Figure 5.65). These fragments suggest slight differences in their form, perhaps associated with the type of metal melted in it. A fragment with gold remains has a flat and circular base, very similar to the triangular cupels reported in La Isabela (Deagan and Cruxent 2002). In contrast, the other two fragments have round bases. Additionally, the
fragment with lead remains has thicker walls. Lead was used for making ammunition and to protect ship hulls from corrosion and worms. The size of the crucible suggests that it was used for ammunition. Deagan and Cruxent found crucible fragments in all areas around La Isabela, including residential areas, concluding that residents of the town were gold assaying and shot making at their homes (Deagan and Cruxent 2002). The small number of crucibles and their concentration in one place suggest the opposite for Nombre de Dios. However, it is necessary to remember that the residential area to the east of the main plaza is still unexplored. Precious metals were measured using *balanzas* [balance scales] or *romanás* [scale beams]. Three scale bars and two hooks were recovered in Nombre de Dios. The bars suggest that they were

![Figure 5.65: Crucible fragments from Nombre de Dios. Left close-up: fragment with lead remains. Right close-up: fragment with gold remains](image-url)
part of scales, which have two equal arms and a suspension rod in the middle (Figure 5.66). Although there were no weights recovered, a Panamanian collector owns one. It is a brass nested weight which was commonly used in the sixteenth century.

Finally, coins are the artifacts most representative of commercial activities and one of the best chronological markers in archaeology. Three silver coins were recovered in excavations dating from the sixteenth century. They are all cob coins. A cob coin is made “from cutting out a slightly overweight blank from a narrow, rather thin strap of carefully alloyed silver...this flan is then further trimmed down...until it falls within legal weight limits for its denomination...” (Craig 2000: 49). The size, shape and impression of cob coins were irregular but they were the proper weight. Many cobs were quite thick and disfigured with large cracks. Moreover, the uneven clumps made poor planchets so only a small portion of the image on the die was impressed on the silver. If a cob was overweight the minter clipped pieces off until reaching the proper weight (Jordan n.d.). All the sixteenth-

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Figure 5.66: Scale bars and hooks found in Nombre de Dios.
century coins manufactured in America were cob coins. Since the coins were hand
made, variations in the quality and die is common.

The mints that produced the most coins in America during the sixteenth
century were Mexico, Potosi, and Lima. Mexico started its mint in 1530, followed by
Lima in 1568 and Potosi in 1573. The main motifs of the dies are consistent, but
there are small variations according to the value of the coin, the mint, and the assayer.
The first aspect to analyze in a coin is the die. One major variation concerning main
motifs occurred in the sixteenth century. Early sixteenth-century coins have on the
obverse side a heraldic shield representing the realm under their control, in this case
Castile and Leon, and on the reverse two prominent crowned Pillars of Hercules.

Figure 5.67: Silver coins found in Nombre de Dios. Obverse faced on top row. Left to right: 2
reales silver coin from Mexico dated between 1542 and 1556. 1 real silver coin from Mexico
dated c.a. 1556. 2 reales silver coin from Lima dated between 1577 and 1588.
After 1556, a cross with lions and castles on the reverse replaced the pillars, while the obverse side continued with the heraldic shield (Figure 5.67). The changing in dies is a good chronological marker because Mexico changed to the cross die in 1556, Potosi in 1576, and Lima sometime between 1568 and 1576.

The second aspect to analyze is other variations in the die based on value, mint and assayer. The value of the coin not only dictated the weight of the coin, but also one of the marks used on the coin. Two of the coins found in Nombre de Dios are 2 reales, which are marked in two different ways. The first coin had two dots in the center between the pillars of the reverse side. In other cases, when the pillars were no longer in use, the mark is “II” on one side of the heraldic shield.

The mint and assayer are two important marks that help to date coins. The mints in the sixteenth century were represented in the coins with “M” or “Mo” from Mexico, “P” or “Po” from Potosi and sometimes Lima. The assayer also used the initial of their family name and, based on archival records, lists of assayers working in the mints of the New World have been created. Finally, the legend on the outside sometimes is helpful to assign a period of production to the coins.

Based on the features just explained, the coins found in Nombre de Dios have been dated to the sixteenth century. The oldest coin found in Nombre de Dios is from the Mexico mint. The legend on the obverse reads “CAROLUS ET IOHANA REGES”, which stands for Charles I and Johanna (1518-1558). On the reverse it reads “HISPANIARVM ET INDIARVM” and between the pillars reads “PLVS VLTTRA”. The existence of the pillar design assigns a pre-1556 date to the coin. In 1542, new die punches were sent to Mexico with some changes in the design of the coins: the assayer’s initial was to be located on the obverse opposed to early designs where the initial was located in the bottom of the pillars on the reverse. This design
was in use between 1542 and 1572. Although the assayer’s mark is not clear on the coin, the mark on the right side of the heraldic shield suggests an L. At the end of the production period of coins from Charles and Johanna, there was an assayer Luis Rodriguez who used an “L” as a mark. Another change introduced in 1542 was water at the bottom of the pillars, representing the Straits of Gibraltar and the ocean passage from the Old World to the New World (Jordan n.d.). Finally, the last change introduced in 1542 was the motto PLUS ULTRA rather than PLUS. Based on all the characteristics, this coin was manufactured sometime between 1542 and 1556. Its value is 2 reales based on the reverse central dots.

The second coin is also from Mexico, based on the mint’s mark “Mo” and the Jerusalem cross with a ball on each end. The cross die sets a date after 1556. The assayer’s initial “O” in Mexico has been dated between 1536 and 1556 but the assayer’s name is still unknown (Craig 2000). The legends on both sides are unidentifiable. Based on the information from the die and the assayer, this coin was manufactured around 1556. Its value is not determined by any marks, but it is likely that it is 1 real based on its weight of 3.5 grams.

The third coin is from Lima. The mark “P” was usually used by Potosi but there are some cases where “P” or “Po” was used in Lima. However, the mint’s initial was on the right side of the heraldic shield while the Potosi coins had the initial on the left side. Underneath the mint’s initial, a “D” mark stands for Diego de la Torre, an assayer in Lima between 1577 and 1588. The legend on the obverse reads “PLILIPVS DG HISPANIARVM”, but the reverse legend is absent. The value of the coin is 2 reales based on the mark on the obverse, left of the heraldic shield.

The large quantity of merchandise and wealth moving through town led to pirate and maroon raids, resulting in a military presence in the port. However,
archival accounts report a lack of adequate defensive forces to protect the town. The evidence in the archaeological record suggests small military activities, even though it is known that the town was continually attacked in the sixteenth century. Only three shots have been recovered archaeologically, and a collector donated the only evidence of edged weapons. The three lead shots have diameters ranging between 0.8 and 1.2 cms (Figure 5.68). The existence of a part of a cannon was reported in the 1990s but it disappeared soon after (Thrower 2004, personal communication). Finally, swords, rapiers, and daggers were usually kept in leather or fabric scabbards with a metal tip, one of the collectors of objects from Nombre de Dios donated three copper-alloy scabbards tips (Figure 5.68).

Figure 5.68: Military artifacts from Nombre de Dios. Left: lead shots. Right: copper alloy case tips.

5.6 Summary

The archaeological evidence suggests that the town followed a traditional Spanish urban grid with a main plaza and government buildings surrounding it. The
existence of stone foundations is evidence of large buildings in the center of the town and more labor spent on government buildings than on individual houses. The small quantity of native and local manufactured ceramics suggest that the houses surrounding the plaza also followed the Spanish traditional distribution of lots based on social status. Additionally, the layout of the Camino Real, the building foundations, the pebbled patio, and the second road, suggest that the town followed a north-south/east-west grid plan instead of following the natural curve of the bay, as was the case of La Isabela.

The architecture found in the different constructions provides the image of a sixteenth-century town with a variety of buildings that range from government buildings with large spaces and more labor spent in their constructions (e.g. stone foundations and pebbled patios) to small households with little labor and money spent in their construction (e.g. clay and lime floors with no foundations). The different architectural styles were present not only in the construction technique (e.g. adobe and tapia) but also in the decorative features that reflected the European architectural traditions (e.g. Gothic and Renaissance) and were expressions of different cultural backgrounds. The existence of architectural decorative features that seem mundane in Spain, such as ceramic tiles and pinnacles, acquired symbolic value in the colonies because they were expensive and their availability was limited.

The faunal evidence indicates that the inhabitants of Nombre de Dios developed diets satisfied with local sources, which provided independence from imported goods. The introduction of European animals allowed the inhabitants to preserve some aspects of Iberian diets, and seasonal access to foods modified daily dietary aspects such as the amount of seafood included. The location of the port was close to marine estuaries, deep and shallow waters that diversify the local diet and
fulfilled the nutritious needs of inhabitants and travelers. During winter months when the town was practically deserted—according to the archival descriptions—access to small fish in shallow waters would fulfill the needs of the residents of the port. In contrast, during the summer months, when the Spanish fleets were scheduled to arrive to Caribbean ports, deep-water fishing would provide large fish capable of feeding larger numbers of people.

The archaeological record suggests a small degree of cultural interaction between natives and Spanish. However, it is necessary to remember that the area surveyed is the center of the town, so Spanish with high status are more likely to live in it based on the traditional lot distribution. The only evidence of a native presence are a few fragments of ceramics—probably the result of native/Spanish cohabitation as suggested in the archival documents. However, the absence of native or African material culture in this survey should not be interpreted as the absence of these populations in the town.

At this time, it is possible to provide evidence of the preservation of European traditions in Nombre de Dios. Artifacts related to personal beliefs and leisure activities as well as diet are the best indicators of cultural preservation or change. Additionally, gambling and lace-making items reveal that leisure times were still occupied with European pastimes. Lastly, diet also suggests the intention to preserve Iberian foodways. Beef and pork were the most consumed meat in the town according to faunal remains. Furthermore, the cuts found in cow and pig remains suggest that the animals were dismembered following Iberian traditions that allow the preparation of the same recipes consumed in Spain.

The archaeological evidence found in Nombre de Dios gives a general idea of the life in the town. In the following chapter, I will integrate the archival and
archaeological evidence. The objective is to analyze the evidence obtained through the four aspects proposed to study city-ports of call of the sixteenth century Caribbean. The analysis of location, urban growth, regional networks, and composition of the population of Nombre de Dios will contribute to the understanding of the failure of the town.
Chapter VI:
Past and Future of Nombre de Dios

Given the documentary and archaeological evidence found in Nombre de Dios, it is possible to analyze the factors that influenced the success or failure of sixteenth century Caribbean city-ports. The evidence allows us to examine the general impact of location, urban growth, development of regional networks, and composition of population, and how they affected the form and structure of Nombre de Dios. Although “location” seem limited to geographic position, there is more to consider, such as access to food sources. Urban growth concerns the distribution of buildings and the complexity of an urban grid, as well as the type of buildings present and the labor spent in their construction. The development of regional networks not only involves commercial activities but also the supply of basic needs that could not be met locally. Finally, the composition of population includes cultural and occupational differences that affected the social interactions among the inhabitants of Nombre de Dios.

The short distance to the Pacific coast determined the geographical location of the Atlantic port for the transisthmic route. The open and deep bay was also decisive in the election of the port location of Nombre de Dios. In addition to these geographical features, the environment played a crucial role in the sustainability of the port. Faunal evidence allowed an understanding of the residents’ diet. Even though the quantity of faunal remains recovered in the field was relatively small, it is
possible to suggest that the population of Nombre de Dios had a diverse diet from maritime and terrestrial sources. It suggests an adaptation to seasonal changes for the acquisition of seafood. Fish and mollusks were local food sources, while pork and beef were imported, initially from Cartagena and Honduras, and later from Natá and Los Santos in Panama. The different sources available to fulfill the dietary needs proved to be enough to sustain not only the inhabitants of Nombre de Dios but also the Spanish fleet and travelers. In the documents analyzed, complaints were found not about lack of food and starvation, but about the difficulty of farming and raising cattle. Apparently, there were enough products coming to the port to supplement local sources, and satisfy the needs of the townspeople.

This steady access to food sources sustained large numbers of inhabitants and travelers, and freed up time to use in the construction of buildings, resulting in urban growth. Bonnie McEwan suggests that one of the most characteristic components of the Spanish colonial culture was the material display of wealth in architecture, foodways, clothing, etc (McEwan in Deagan 1995). Small variations in architectural features often mean cultural variations based on origin or status. The archaeological and documentary evidence for Nombre de Dios suggests the existence of a diverse architecture in the port, perhaps a result of different European origins and/or economic/social status. However, even though the architecture appears diverse, the construction rate of buildings was slow. A lack of craftsmanship among the port’s inhabitants resulted in poor constructions, unviable locations, and the need to constantly rebuild the town. Individual interests motivating different descriptions of the town resulted in ambiguous images of the degree of development and urban expansion of the port. Further archaeological research can answer questions about the residential areas in the town. What appears to be clear is that the subordination of
Nombre de Dios to Panama City led to the existence of few governmental buildings in the port. It was not until the last quarter of the sixteenth century that Nombre de Dios counted a few strong public buildings.

The growth of the town depended on steady food supplies, construction capabilities, and easy importation of products. Although it has been proved that Nombre de Dios had sufficient resources to support its inhabitants, there were materials and products that were not available locally. Thus, the development of transatlantic and regional networks was crucial for the survival and growth of the town. It is evident that the inhabitants of the port had access to European products during the trade fairs. However, during periods when the fleets were not in port, regional markets had to fulfill local demand. This regional trading network was fundamental for the maintenance of the town. The network changed over time according to the circumstances of the region. The initial suppliers that were influential at the beginning of the century were Caribbean islands such as Santo Domingo and the Windward Islands. By the middle of the century, the main suppliers were Cartagena and Honduras because they became larger producers in the Caribbean. Finally, when maritime transportation proved to be dangerous because of piracy, the regional trading network switched from maritime to terrestrial. Even though producer settlements were far from Nombre de Dios, it was safer to transport basic supplies by land than by sea. Los Santos and Natá became the main suppliers for Nombre de Dios. Certainly, the port continued to receive products from other ports when the fleets arrived, but not to the same extent as it had in the middle of the century. In addition to Caribbean and Panamanian suppliers, Pacific colonies were also main suppliers. Nombre de Dios kept a close relation with southern colonies,
such as Quito and Peru, because the transportation of royal revenues for Spain created
the opportunity to maintain constant movement of goods to supply the Atlantic port.

The inhabitants of Nombre de Dios do not represent a typical population for
sixteenth-century Spanish colonies. The models from Deagan for St. Augustine
(Deagan and Koch 1983), Deagan and Cruxent for La Isabela (Deagan and Cruxent
2002), and Zarankin for Santa Fe La Vieja (1995) discussed in Chapter III are built
based on populations with a strong native presence. The documentary and
archaeological information in Nombre de Dios suggests that there was a weak native
presence at the beginning of the settlement, which became practically nonexistent by
the end of the sixteenth century. Thus, mestizaje in Nombre de Dios between natives
and Spanish settlers did not occur to the same degree it did in other colonies. Instead,
mestizaje in Nombre de Dios was primarily between African and Spanish residents.

The presence of Africans in Nombre de Dios had a far larger impact than the
presence of natives. Slavery was one of the factors that maintained the town since
slave labor permitted the transportation of merchandise across the Isthmus, and
enslaved Africans were probably the ones developing local food sources. Although
slavery had a positive impact on the economy of the town, it was also harmful for the
port. Spanish mistreatment, a difficult environment, and large numbers of Africans
arriving in the town, led to the development of maroon settlements. The strong
adaptability of the African population, and their ability to use the harsh environment
to their advantage, enabled long-term African rebellion against the Spanish system in
Panama. The negative impact of this rebellion contributed to the decline of Nombre
de Dios, since it was especially vulnerable. However, after enslaved people acquired
their freedom and the Spanish established the free town of Santiago del Principe, the
Africans were accepted as members of the community, not with equal rights, but as
contributors to the subsistence of the town not only as food producers, but also as soldiers defending the port.

The occupations of the inhabitants also had an impact on the port. The homogeneity of the population in terms of activities affected the development of the settlement. Commercial and government activities were with no doubt the main occupation of the inhabitants. This had a negative impact on the physical development of the town. The lack of craftsmen contributed to poor decision making related to location and type of construction of fundamental structures in the town, such as the fortress and the pier. Furthermore, the intense commercial activity and the large number of government officials also resulted in weak administrative structures. The continual change of personnel and of the composition of administrative structures encouraged corruption and transgression of many regulations. These factors diminished the royal funds and the funds available for the town’s infrastructure.

The importance of the port in Spanish global trading network had an impact not only on the occupations of the town’s inhabitants but also on the demographic growth of the town. Intense periods of commercial activity, followed by periods of stagnation, caused a continual flux of population that affected the development of the town. The instability of a permanent community delayed the development of a community identity, which resulted in disinterest and neglect. The continual changes in regulations further eroded interest in developing the port permanently.

The role of Nombre de Dios as a recipient of Spain’s and Peru’s products but not as a regional center led to its subordination to Panama City. The Audiencia de Panama filtered communication between the port and the Spanish Crown. Even though Nombre de Dios was the first stop for royal correspondence, the Crown
communication was directed to Panama City. Since the regulations were placed in Panama City and the trade direction was to the south or to interior colonies after the fleet arrived to Nombre de Dios, news of changes were delayed or did not reach the port at all.

The subordination of Nombre de Dios to Panama City also resulted in the continual movement of population between the two cities. Although the archival evidence only counts relatively few people residing in both ports, it is likely that there were many residents of Nombre de Dios that traveled to other colonies as part of their commercial activities. This flux of people resulted in a constant demographic fluctuation in the town. Finally, those who argue that the port was relocated due to its ill environment have no foundations for this claim. Nombre de Dios had a harsh environment but it was not very different from Cartagena and Veracruz, and certainly not worse than Portobelo, which is only twenty miles away. After analyzing the proposed four aspects – location, urban growth, regional networks, and population composition – it is possible to understand the weak structures of the town. If we follow Colombijn’s statement that daily negotiations for food, shelter, and access to land determine the success or failure of a city (Colombijn in Smith 2003), there is no explanation for the abandonment of Nombre de Dios. Even though the development, stability, and success of a settlement greatly depend on the fulfillment of basic needs, the situation of the Spanish fleet ports-of-call is different.

The competition between Spain, England, and France to conquer territory in America and acquire wealth resulted in the need to develop defense mechanisms to protect major ports. These defense mechanisms largely depended on the local population and local conditions. In the case of Nombre de Dios, the local population seemed more interested in commercial and administrative activities than in investing
any effort towards the defense of the town. It was not a place most wanted to live in for the rest of their lives and raise families. The creation of successful defense mechanisms for the port would involve creativity and economic investment from the local population. The lack of interest from government and inhabitants of Nombre de Dios resulted in a defenseless situation, eventually remedied by the move to and fortification of Portobelo. Furthermore, the change in urban strategies from Spain was the decisive aspect in the location of ports of call. The emphasis on religious conversion and conquest changed to defense and trade. Thus, the ports were evaluated according to their viability for defense and their location along trade routes.


At the end of the sixteenth century, the increasing likelihood of foreign attacks led the Spanish Crown to undertake an evaluation of America’s ports of call. The criteria used for this evaluation included environment and location, but above all, defensible features. Although the differential development of the ports of call had some influence in the decision to relocate them at the end of the sixteenth century, the degree of development of each was not the decisive factor. Cities and ports were easily relocated because the cities were based on citizens not on locations; thus, a city could be moved anywhere without affecting the core of the settlement.

If we return to the analysis of function, form, and structure, it is possible to better understand the new conditions the Spanish Crown was requiring for its colonial ports-of-call. The initial function of the ports-of-call was obviously commercial. However, at the end of the sixteenth century, ports-of-call had a defensive function as
well. To carry on with these two functions, a specific form was required. Roman military engineer Baptista Antonelli traveled through the Caribbean evaluating the features of the ports of call and their capability to hold trade fairs and to defend treasure and territory. One of the ports visited by Antonelli was Cartagena.

The geographic features of the Cartagena Bay were conducive to the defense of the city. The narrow entrance to the bay and the bay’s potential to build forts to watch these entrances was very favorable to the city. It was possible to defend the port as well as attack the enemy from different points in the bay. This was crucial in the Spanish layout of its colonial ports of call. In addition to its defensible bay, Cartagena had another special feature. Initially, Cartagena was not essential for the American-European trade network, but it became important in the Caribbean because of favorable trade winds, its easy port access, and its central role in the regional network. The fortunate location of Cartagena led it to develop connections to hinterlands contributing to its survival and to the continued life of many colonies.

The development of Cartagena as food producer and its ability to maintain a constant flux of imports-exports with other American colonies prevented it from becoming an episodic city relying entirely on the arrival of the Spanish fleet to activate commercial activities. Instead, Cartagena experienced a rapid size and population growth so that by 1630, it was three or four times larger than Veracruz (De la Fuente 2008: 224).

In contrast to Cartagena, Veracruz and Nombre de Dios both had slow urban developments. Alejandro de la Fuente suggests that their intimate relation with the Spanish Crown and its viceroyalties delayed their development because the Crown closely controlled their commercial relations with Europe and other colonies. (de la Fuente 2008). However, as demonstrated in the case of Nombre de Dios, this control
was fictitious. If Veracruz was subordinate to Mexico City like Nombre de Dios was subordinate to Panama City, then the slow urban development was due to the emphasis on the regional capital instead of on the port. The Spanish Crown enforced a strict control from Spain to the New World, but locally, Veracruz and Nombre de Dios were neglected ports. Cartagena, by contrast, grew largely independent of mandates from Bogota, and briefly had its own mint.

Another shared characteristic between Veracruz and Nombre de Dios was their reputation as insalubrious and dangerous places. It is possible that this reputation was due to a large number of people passing through the ports and relating their experiences. Unlike other cities with a steady number of inhabitants including Cartagena, thousands of people passed through Veracruz and Nombre de Dios. The accounts describing illness are obviously more than the accounts found for other places that were not transit points. Moreover, the environmental conditions of the two ports were probably not too different from other colonies along the Caribbean coast; thus, their reputation as Spanish graveyards was probably unfair.

Despite their similarities, Veracruz had three features that Nombre de Dios lacked. First, Veracruz benefited from the presence of a native population that contributed to the initial development and sustainability of the port. However, Nombre de Dios was able to survive without the involvement of natives in the establishment of the city. Second, Veracruz had access to Chinese products. Thus, it was the supplier of these goods and other inland products to Caribbean islands such as Cuba, not to mention Spain. In contrast, Nombre de Dios had only to offer leftovers from the trade fairs and silver from Peru. Third, Veracruz had the geographical features to defend the port from foreign attacks. The entrance to Veracruz was protected by the island of San Juan de Ulúa, which allowed for the
defense from and the attack of enemies from different points, similar to Cartagena. On the other hand, the Nombre de Dios bay was not conducive to build fortification structures—like in Veracruz and Cartagena—that would defend the town before enemy ships arrived at the port.

When the port of call was moved from Nombre de Dios to Portobelo in 1597, many features of the port remained the same as they were in Nombre de Dios. De la Fuente states that Portobelo, despite its maritime importance and imposing defenses, did not become a major urban center. Between 1596 and 1630, its population oscillated between 30 and 40 vecinos (de la Fuente 2008). From 1540 to 1650 the Isthmus handled around sixty percent of the trade between Spain and the New World, but Panamanian cities did not develop as major urban centers. This is probably due to the harsh environment and limited capabilities to produce goods in Panama.

Finally, if the conditions were practically the same in Portobelo and Nombre de Dios, why the need to change the location of the port? Although the answer seems simplistic, the reason proposed is that Nombre de Dios’ geographical features did not comply with the required form of ports established by Antonelli and the Spanish Crown at the end of the sixteenth century. The change in urban planning dictated the end of Nombre de Dios because the seaports were planned at the end of the sixteenth century with military and commercial requirements that the Nombre de Dios bay did not fulfill.

In conclusion, this dissertation found that Nombre de Dios was abandoned due to geographical features that did not follow the Spanish urbanistic plan of ports-of-call at the end of the sixteenth century. The ecological reasons for the abandonment of Nombre de Dios sets this port apart from other early colonies also abandoned but due to continual native attacks, or far locations from trading routes (e.g. Santa Maria
La Antigua del Darien, San Sebastian, Acla, among others). The unique case of Nombre de Dios provides new insights in urban studies of Spanish colonies in Latin America.

6.2 Future archaeological studies in Nombre de Dios

Although the town was successfully located during field work in 2007, there are still many unknowns relating to the physical structure of the town and population. We now have a general idea of where the buildings were; however, only site excavations can confirm their orientation, use, and construction techniques. Site excavations of other identified features such as clay and lime floors, trash pits, and post molds, can also provide a better understanding of the town’s urban plan. Furthermore, evidence of significant fires in the archaeological record and their archival descriptions can help to understand the urban changes of the town over time. Site excavations can also refine the chronology of the town, providing more clues about the changes in subsistence activities and diet, and the harsh conditions that the settlers faced.

Another interesting topic is the study of the residential area of the Spanish town. It is necessary to expand the area of study to the east and south where artifacts and burials have been reported. An analysis of areas that are not close to the center of the town could provide more evidence of mestizaje and perhaps evidence of relations between Spanish and native inhabitants.

The existence of Santiago del Principe in close proximity to colonial Nombre de Dios raises many questions about cultural interactions between Spanish settlers and free Africans. Furthermore, it also questions the origins of modern Nombre de
Dios. Current inhabitants of the town are aware of the existence of the remains of a Negro town in an area occupied today. The study of Santiago del Principe can greatly contribute to urban studies. The administrative structure of the town was a complex mix of Spanish and African leaderships. The freedom of the pacified maroons to choose their leaders at the same time that they were subjugated to Spanish and religious representatives, probably resulted in a unique and new type of urban structure.

Another important aspect of the history of Nombre de Dios is the settlement of 1509. Although Diego de Nicuesa lived for a short period of time on the site (apparently two years), there is still discussion about the fate of the rest of the settlers (Romoli 1953, Velarde 1978). Some historians suggest the complete abandonment of the site when Nicuesa left, while others suggest some of the residents stayed in the settlement and died sometime after. In addition to the population, archival documents suggest that Nicuesa built a fort on a hill. A search for this first settlement could answer questions regarding urban organization of early American colonies and the final destiny of Nicuesa’s expedition in Nombre de Dios.

The potential of the site for further archaeological research is undisputable. The site has unique conditions for archaeological studies because even with all the looting and mining activities from the past two decades, there is still a large undisturbed area where only sixteenth-century features are found. There is a need to follow the research not only in the field but also with public archaeology. The public archaeology program undertaken in 2007 was successful not only in creating curiosity among the modern inhabitants of Nombre de Dios, but also in creating agency on their part to protect their cultural heritage.
Finally, there is also great potential for study of cultural identities. The current population of Nombre de Dios is heterogeneous. Some residents migrated from the Herrera region of Panama a few decades ago. Other residents identify themselves as descendants of immigrants from the Darien region of Colombia. Finally, there is a group with unknown historical identity. Perhaps they are the descendants of maroon groups, or from the pacified African group that lived in Santiago del Principe and the surrounding region. A detailed study of the *Carnaval de Diablos* can further contribute to the reconstruction of their histories. The Carnaval is one of the biggest festivities in the region, and Nombre de Dios residents claim that it originated there. The ritual of the Carnaval appears to be a reminiscent of the relations between Africans and priests.

In addition to anthropological studies, the site has potential for geophysical studies. Since Alexis Mojica undertook the preliminary geophysical studies outlined in chapter V, the Sorbonne University hopes to secure funding to carry on a field school to further study the site. Interest from many people in the archaeological studies of Nombre de Dios has proved that there is still a lot to do in the study of early Spanish colonies. I hope this dissertation will awaken the interest of more historical archaeologists to study sixteenth-century colonies in Latin America, and specifically, in Nombre de Dios.
Appendix 1

Original transcriptions and chronology of events
**Inventory of goods from Juana Maria Destrada who died in 1583 and owned a *pulperia* [shop] (AGI Contratacion 928 N15\1\1)**

- Negra llamada Juana de Tierra Bran
- Una pulperia
- 200 pesos de plata ensayada
- 2 colchones de melinzetta raydos
- 4 almohadas raydas con lana
- 6 camisas raydas y 2 parece de naguas de ruan
- 1 par de manteles y 4 pañuelos de mesa
- 4 varas de ________
- 1 frutero de red nuevo labrado
- Tres varas de ruan
- 29 varajas de naypes resobados
- 1 apresador de ruan labrado de blanco nuevo
- 11 varas de cintas de seda azul sensilla
- 5 manos de papel
- 1 papel con unas gargantillas de azavache
- 4 telas de gorgueras
- 1 madeja de seda blanca
- 1 madeja de hilo casero
- 6 piezas de cintas blancas de hilo blanco
- 2 navajas
- 1 papel con unos narcillos de vidrio
- 1 papel con unas pacas de agujas
- 1 onza de azafran
- 3 sartas de gargantillas de vidrio
- un papel con unos dedales de azafran
- Una talega con un poco de pimienta
- Seis madejas de carrete
- 4 candeleros de azofar 2 nuevas y 2 raydas
- \(\frac{1}{2}\) libra de hilo gallundero
- 4 pares de tijeras de cortar
- Un par de chapines raydos
- 14 pares de alpargatas
- 33 platos y porcelanas de loza de pisa
- 2 botijas de manteca pequeñas
- otras 2 botijas de miel de nicaragua pequeñas
- Una tinaja grande de tener agua rayda
- Otras dos nuevas mas pequeñas
- 2 pares de cotizos
- 1 papel con unas pocas de agujas delgadas
- 4 cazuelas grandes y dos chicas de barro
- 3 docenas de platos blancos gordos
- Una oca (sic) de lino y otra de mengalatra ____ digo que no es mas de una
- 7 escobas de barrer

* The blank spaces are illegible words in the document, and the ford (sic) means that the previous word’s spelling or meaning might not be accurate.
- 1 peso viejo y balanzas
- 3 botijas perulera de sal
- una mesa de cadena
- 1 cama de lienzo
- 2 cucharas y 1 tenedor de plata
- 1 silla pequeña de sentar
- 2 hamacas de niño una nueva y otra vieja
- 1 cajón con llaves
- un sombrero y 1 escobilla de limpiar
- 340 zarcillos de barro pequeños
- 1 abanico de acofar
- 1 caldera de cobre
- 2 mantas de algodón blancas una nueva y una rayda
- cien reales en reales
- un petate nuevo

DOCUMENT 2

Inventory of goods from Andrea de Guzman who died in Nombre de Dios in 1577 (AGI Contratacion 474B N4 R1\13\1)

- cuentas de oro gordillas que son veinte y ocho
- Un apretador destampillas de oro y perlas
- Un rostrillo de botoncillos de plata muy pequeños
- Una bolsa de seda y oro
- La hechura de un crucifijo de cuarzo
- Un niño jesus las ejaradel (sic)
- Unos guantes picados
Una arca en que estaban lo siguiente
- una cobija de lienzo
- una delatantera vieja colorada
- quatro sabanas
- otras dos sabanas
- una camisa vieja
- otra camisa vieja
- otra sabana viena dos almohadas
- una enaguas de cañamizo
- un paño de cañamizo
- una saya con su queza alta de raso morado guarnecida de terciopelo
- ptra vasquina de tafetan ______ muy viejas
- tres pares de hervillas
- otra almohada
- una mesa vieja
- dos sillas viejas
- unas tabla grande
- una poca de lana y una savana de colchon
DOCUMENT 3

Bienes de Andres Palomino (Merchant?) who died in 1571 (AGI Contratacion 208B N2 R2\1\1):

- Ocho cuencos con sus bastidores de virtudes
- Una saya de terciopelo negra con su quera rayda
- Una saya de tafetan encañado guarnecida de terciopelo verde con su quera y botones de oro y seda
- 44 cerraduras de cajas de las tercera con sus llaves.
Luego se abrió una caja grande y en ella se halló lo siguiente:
- una capa y un sayo de raza raido con tres fajas la capa de tafetan
- unas calzas pardas de terciopelo pardo raydos
- un jabon de raso negro raydo
- otra capa y otro sayo de raso rayda
- un capote de paño negro raydo con sus alamares e bueltas de terciopelo
- Una calzas de gamuza guarnecidas de terciopelo raydas
- Dos gorras la una de terciopelo e otra de raso raydas
- Unos calzones greguescos de terciopelo carmesi con alamares de lo mismo
- Dos jabones viejos de olanda raydos
- Una ropilla e unos greguescos viejos morados para la mar
- Un colete de cordovan viejo con sus botones
- Un capote de paño guarnecido de terciopelo negro con sus ebras
- Una cota de malea
- Un pedazo de lienzo crea que tiene tres baras
- Cuatro camisas raídas de hombre
- Una almohada de lienzo e tizas de seda azul
- Un pedazo de rafa guarnecida con ocho fajas de terciopelo negro con cordonales y feveco e tres fajas de raza por dentro
- Una huepa de arcabuz con munición dentro
- Unas toallas de lienzo casero
- Un paño de rostro labrado de seda de grana
- Una espada e una daga con su talabarte de terciopelo negro viejo
- Un peso y un marco de pesar plata
Luego se abrió otra caja y en ella se halló lo siguiente
- Una capa de raza guarnecida con ocho fajas de terciopelo negro con cordonales y feveco e tres fajas de raza por dentro
- Un jubon de raza negro nuevo
- Ocho camisas nuevas de ruan con cuellos de olanda
- Cuatro docenas y tres pares de calcetas de nabas
- Ocho docenas de botones del pigueta negros
- Diez y seis cofres chiquitos de terciopelo de colores en el uno una cadena de alquimia con una imagen de los mismo con sartas de opal y vidrio
- Otro cofrecito sin ninguna cosa adentro
- Cuatro docenas de capíllizos (sic) blancos
- Dos bonetes de paño morisco
- Dos pares de botas viejas digo un par
- Dos arcabuces de munición
- Un arcabuz dorado que es de un vecino de Sevilla
- Cuarenta y cuatro docenas de cordones de seda de colores (faltaron 2 ½ docenas)
Luego se abrió otra caja de mercaderías que dijeron ser de Joan de Hojeda vecino de Sevilla que _____ y en ella lo siguiente:
- Una saya de paño verde guarnecida de terciopelo verde rayda
- Dos almohadas de crema con tizas de red
- Unas medias de punto negras raídas
- Doce madejas de hilo galludero
- Doce madejas de hilo primo para zapateros
- Dos almarrajas de agua de olor
- Unos manteles de seis pañuelos de mesa
- Tres pares de toallas unas de lienzo casero
- Un paño de rostro viejo
- Tres pañuelos de narices raídos
- Tres pares de calcetas de aguilan nuevas
- Un tranchete de zapatero
- Tres cadenas de vidrio y diez y seis sartas de abalorio en un frasco
- Treinta y tres pares de herbillas de mujer nacarizadas
- Doce pares de botines altos de mujer negros
- Veinte y dos pares de zapatos negros de culla los dos pares de hombre y los demas de muchachos
- Unos pantufos
- Ciento catorce pares de zapatillos de niño e muchachos

Todo lo cual se devolvió a la caja.
- Dos pañuelos de mesa y unos manteles
- Un ___ de Y de oro con pastilla e reliquia
- Unas calzas de terciopelo negro que se vendieron en diez y siete pesos
- Un negro nombrado Felipe de sevilla criollo de edad de diez y ocho años

DOCUMENTO 4

Goods from Francisco Valencia (Merchant) who died in 1575 (AGI Contratacion 201 N2 R4\1\1)

- Una espada con su vaina de cuero
- Seis botones de metal con sus rosas de oro
- Una calzas de terciopelo negro con canones de ras
- Un talabarte con sus tiros de terciopelo negro
- Un colete de cordoban viejo
- Unas calzas de gamuza vieja
- Una capa y un sayo de paño raído
- Unos zaraguellos viejos de tafetán pardo
- Unos zaraguellos de paño azul muy viejos
- Un jabón de lienzo viejo
- Otro jabón viejo
- Unas medias calzas de paño azul viejas
- Un colete muy viejo y unas botas viejas
- Dos camisas de lienzo raídas
- Otras dos camisas raídas
- Otras dos camisas de hombre
- Otras dos camisas
- Otras dos camisas de hombre
- Dos pares de zaraguellos de lienzo
- Un apretador de cabeza y otras calcetas viejas
- Unos manteles y ocho paños de mesa viejos
DOCUMENT 5

Appraisal guide from 1565 (Panama II F359r – 375r)

A
- Alpargatas se han avaluado a quince y a diez y seis y diez y ocho y veinte y treinta pesos de plata corriente marcada. Cada en pares de ellos.
- Algodón hilado a quince y a veinte pesos el quintal.
- Algodón por hilar a dos pesos y medio el arroba.
- Azúcar a cuatro y a cinco y seis y siete y nueve pesos el arroba.
- Ajos a diez pesos el quintal.
- Almidón a dos pesos y dos y medio y tres el arroba.

B
- Brea que se traen de Nicaragua se ha avaluado a cuatro y a seis pesos en plata corriente el quintal.
- Bálsamo que se traen de Nicaragua se ha avaluado a cincuenta pesos de la plata cada botija perulera que hace una arroba poco mas las medio peruleras a veinte cinco pesos.
- Badanas (sic) a cuatro pesos la docena.
- Botas de becerro y venado que se traen de Nicaragua a dos pesos el par.
- Batas pequeñas a tres reales cada una.

C
- Cana fistola se ha avaluado a diez y a quince pesos el arroba.
- Charzaparrilla [Zarzaparrilla] a veinte pesos el quintal que es al mayor precio que se ha avaluado y a trece pesos el mas bajo precio.
- Conserva en barriles a veinte y cinco pesos el arroba y en botijas a seis pesos cada una.
- Carne de membrillo a diez pesos el arroba y a diez y a quince.
- Cordobanes a ocho y a doce pesos la docena.
- Caballos a veinte y cinco y cincuenta y ciento y a ciento y veinte y cinco pesos cada uno.
- Cebadilla que es una hierba con que se mata el gusano a peso la fanega.
- Copal a cuatro pesos el arroba.
- Cabras a dos pesos cada una.
- Copey en botijas que es un licor que se traen del Perú de la punta de Santa Elena [Ecuador] que por ser mucho lo gastan en brear los navíos en lugar de alquitran. Se avaluá a peso la botija.
- Cera negra que se traen de Nicaragua se ha avaluado desde diez y ocho hasta treinta pesos conforme a los tiempos.
- Cacao a diez pesos la carga. Son veinticuatro mil granos.
- Calzas de gamuza que traen de México a diez pesos el par.
- Corazas vale diez para sillas de la gineta que traen de Nicaragua a dos pesos.
- Cueros de vaca curtidos a dos pesos cada uno.

E
- Escriptorios pequeños hechos de indios que se traen de México y Nicaragua a tres pesos cada uno.
- Espejos de indios a cinco reales.

F
- Fríoles que es comida para negros a cuatro pesos la fanega.
Gallinas se han avaluadas a tres reales y medio y cuatro reales y a cinco cada una que es el precio a que comúnmente las venden cuando llegan los navíos porque vienen muy flacas de la mar y no se pueden comer en mucho tiempo hasta que las engordan.

- Garbanzos a tres pesos y medio y a cuatro a seis la fanega.
- Gamuzas curtidas a seis tomines cada una.
- Guayacán a dos reales cada palo que es de a vara de medir cada uno y delgadas.
- Grana de México a veinte pesos cada una la libra.
- Guarniciones de cuero de caballos baladíes a tres pesos cada una.
- Guantes a seis pesos la docena.

Harina se ha avaluado a tres reales y medio y a cuatro y a cinco reales el arroba. Conforme a la falta o abundancia que de ella hay al tiempo que llegan los navíos y este el precio que comúnmente vale de contado. Como ello se valta y mucha de ella venden a menos precio porque se daña luego.

- Higos pasados se han avaluados desde tres pesos hasta ocho el quintal.
- Habas a tres pesos la fanega.
- Hechuras de magines que traen de México parecen estar avaluados desde un peso hasta treinta conforme a la alta mano de cada una.

Lana a doce reales el arroba y a este precio se ha avaluado comúnmente.

- Lona para velas de navíos a tres reales y medio y a cuatro la vara.
- Líquido ámbar a tres reales la libra y en botijas a veinte y cinco pesos cada una.

Mulatas se han avaluado a veinte y cinco y a treinta y cincuenta y a sesenta pesos cada una y a setenta y cinco.

- Maíz a ocho y a diez y a doce reales cada fanega lo cual vale al presente a cinco reales por ser la flota pequeña y sin mucha (sic) cantidad.
- Miel de abejas que se traen de Nicaragua en cantidad se valúa a cuatro y a cinco pesos la botija.
- Miel de caña a dos pesos la botija y a menos.
- Manteca de puerco a dos pesos la botijuela.
- Mantas de algodón a un peso y a peso y medio y a dos pesos cada una conforme al grandor que tienen.
- Maní que es una fruta seca que se trae del Perú a quince reales la fanega.
- Mascaras que traen de México a cuatro reales cada una.
- Mostaza a ocho pesos la fanega.

Ollas de barro que se traen de Nicaragua y de Nicuya en mucha cantidad se avalúan ordinariamente a dos reales cada una.

Pabilo de algodón para hacer candelas se ha avaluado desde diez y seis pesos hasta veinte y cinco el quintal.

- Plomo a diez pesos y a doce y medio el quintal y valiendo barato se valúa a cinco pesos el quintal.
- Petates que son como esteras de palma a un peso y medio y a dos pesos cada una.
- Paños bajos de México a diez y seis reales la vara.
- Pasamanos de seda de México a diez pesos la libra.
- Pasas que se traen del Perú a seis pesos y a siete y hasta diez el quintal. Conforme al tamaño que tienen

- Puercos a tres y a cuatro y a cinco pesos conforme al tamaño que tienen.
- Platos y escudillas a ocho y diez la docena.

**Q**
- Quesos de Guamanga se avalúan a quince y a diez y a ocho reales cada uno.
- Quesos de Quito a cuatro y a cinco reales cada uno.

**R**
- Rosarios hechos de indios que se traen de México se han evaluados a tres reales cada uno.

**S**
- Sombreros que traen de México se han evaluados a ocho reales cada uno.
- Servidores de barro a peso los grandes y a medio los pequeños.
- Sebo a cinco y a seis pesos el quintal.
- Sebo de capaduras en botijas tres pesos cada uno.
- Sardinas a seis pesos el millar.
- Sayal a cuatro y a seis y a ocho y a diez reales la vara.
- Seda de México a trece pesos la libra.
- Sal a diez y a doce y a quince reales la fanega llenas subido precio y a ocho reales el moderado.

**T**
- Tocinos se han evaluado a peso y medio y a dos pesos cada uno.
- Tinajas a peso y medio.
- Trementíra de tres pesos a seis la botija.
- Telas blancas de algodón hechas de indios a quince reales a cada uno.
- Tullos (sic) a dos y a tres pesos cada ciento.
- Telas de seda a seis reales cada una.
- Tijeras de fundidor venidas de México a cincuenta pesos el par.

**V**
- Bizcocho a cinco y a seis pesos el quintal
- Vnsu (sic) sin sal a dos pesos la arroba

**X**
- Zarga (sic) para navios se evalúa a siete y a ocho pesos el quintal.
- Jamones a ocho reales cada uno
- Jerga a cinco reales la vara.

Todo lo cual que dicho hacemos .............a su Magestad y lo firma de nuestro nombre hecho en Panamá a seis del mes de mayo de mil quinientos sesenta y cinco años

Tristan de Silva Campofrio Agustín de Foaro (sic)
## CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Building Structures &amp; Fires</th>
<th>Households &amp; Inhabitants</th>
<th>Natives</th>
<th>Slaves &amp; Free Africans</th>
<th>Maroons</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Piracy</th>
<th>Population</th>
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<tr>
<td>1519-1530</td>
<td>1528- Contratación lots are given for houses</td>
<td>1519- Chuchures from Honduras</td>
<td>1529- Encomienda of Secativa</td>
<td>1531-1534/5 - White slaves arrived</td>
<td>1534- Maroons are in the area</td>
<td>1531- Crown approves one smelting of gold and silver a year</td>
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<td>1531-1540</td>
<td>1535- Hospital is poor</td>
<td>1536- Contratación lots are given for houses</td>
<td>1534- Clemente de Campo sends natives from his encomienda to Acla</td>
<td>1534-20 African and white slaves arrived</td>
<td>1536- Maroons attacked the town</td>
<td>1536- Corruption of officials to please governor</td>
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<td>1537- French pirates threat</td>
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<td>1541-1550</td>
<td>1541- Conflict between an individual and the priest for a lot used for the bell tower</td>
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<td>1541- Cabildo asks for tax relief to rebuild houses</td>
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<td>1547- Conflicts between Pizarro and inhabitants</td>
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<td>1548- Petition denied to build houses on the beach behind the Contratacion.</td>
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<td>1548- Cabildo asks for one melting of gold and silver</td>
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<td>1548- Africans are not allow after dark on the streets</td>
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<td>1549- First maroon movement led by Felipillo</td>
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<td>1550- Complaints for illnesses and difficulties to raise cattle</td>
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<td>1550- More than one official needs to be present during valuations of merchandise to avoid frauds</td>
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<td>1551-1560</td>
<td>1555- Church is falling. 1556- Crown orders to build a castle on the reefs with an aljibe 1560- Town needs a pier</td>
<td>1560- Foreigners are ordered to leave the colonies</td>
<td>1552- Town of natives is establish next to Panama City. Some are from Nombre de Dios</td>
<td>1552- Slaves taken by maroons</td>
<td>1551- Felipillo is captured 1552- Maroons kidnapped slaves</td>
<td>1557- Cabildo asks for relief in almojarifazgo on supplies from Barlovento</td>
<td>1552- French pirates threat</td>
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<td>1561-1570</td>
<td>1561- Hospital is falling. 1562- Main chapel is rebuilt with wood but there are no funds for the rest of the building 1567- Crown gives funds for hospital beds</td>
<td>1561- Population declined due to difficulties on raise cattle, cultivate, and maroons 1562- Few vecinos after fleet leaves.</td>
<td>1568- There are 100 vecinos living in town - People without license arrive in fleets</td>
<td>1561- Maroons take slaves</td>
<td>1561- Cabildo asks for a correnduria de lonja - Visitador from Cartagena stops supplies for the town 1562- Changes from 4 appointed regidores to 8 elected and 4 chosen from those 1563- Clergy interferes with government because there is no bishop 1569- Conflicts between officials and fleets</td>
<td>1566- French pirates threats</td>
<td>1568- French and English threats 1569- Tolu is attacked by pirates</td>
<td>Decline</td>
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<td>1571-1580</td>
<td>1572- El Morro prepared to hold a cannon. - Church is built of stone. - There is treasure house, plaza, and a broad street 1573- The pier is impossible to build - Fleets built barracks</td>
<td>1572- The town is as big as Plymouth (Drake) - Conflicts among inhabitants 1575- Complaints of ill environment</td>
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<td>1574- Free africans have to pay tribute 1575- 500 slaves serving in town and 500 in the Camino -Census of free africans living in town</td>
<td>1571- Maroons attacks the Camino</td>
<td>1571- Town needs alcalde mayor. - Officials are also merchants 1572- Fleets put tents on the beach 1574- Fleets introduce illegal merchandise 1575- Cabildo asks for extension on relief of tax on flour from Peru for the town. - NdD Officials are corrupt. - Changes from 2 officials in Panama and NdD to 3 in Panama 1580- Fleets fraud by including merchandise absent in the registries</td>
<td>1571- Town attacked by pirates 1572- Drake attacked town French threats 1573- French and English threats 1575- Cabildo asks for galeones to watch the coast</td>
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<td>1581-1590</td>
<td>1583- There is a Calle de la Carrera 1589- There are 4 main streets</td>
<td>1587- The town is not ill environment</td>
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<td>1584- Cerro de Cabra maroons are pacified</td>
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<td>1588- Alcade mayor has no vote on regidores elections. - Conflict between officials and fleets</td>
<td>1582- Spanish look for pirates on the coast</td>
<td>Abruptly decline</td>
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<td>1596- (August) Fire</td>
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<td>1592- vecinos are merchants or ship owners - Cattle is brought from Nata and Los Santos</td>
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<td>1595- Slaves runaway because of Spanish mistreatment</td>
<td>1592- Bayano maroons are pacified 1593- Crown orders Santiago del Principe to merge with town 1596- Cabildo asks to merge Santiago del Principe 1597- Pacified maroons help building Portobelo</td>
<td>1596- Merchants do not use the Correduria de Lonja. 1597- Cabildo asks for construction of lonja and for relief in alcabala because of a fire</td>
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<td>1597- Vecinos have to move to Portobelo</td>
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Appendix 2

Tables
Table 2.1
Ceramic fragments by vessel function found in the archaeological survey

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<th>Storage and transportation</th>
<th>Food Preparation</th>
<th>Consumption</th>
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<th>Leisure</th>
<th>Handles</th>
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<th>% Identified fragments per type</th>
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Table 2.2
Ceramic fragments by vessel forms found in the archaeological survey in Nombre de Dios

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<th>Cuenco/ bowl</th>
<th>Escudilla</th>
<th>Taza</th>
<th>Pitcher/ Jug/ Jar</th>
<th>Jarrón</th>
<th>Albarelo</th>
<th>Lebrillo</th>
<th>Bacin</th>
<th>Mortero</th>
<th>Olla</th>
<th>Orza</th>
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Table 2.5

Iron fragments by form found in the archaeological survey in Nombre de Dios

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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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PRIMARY SOURCES

The archival documents used in this dissertation are from the *Archivo General de Indias* in Seville, the *Archivo Nacional de Panama*, and the British Library. The documents found in the *Archivo Nacional de Panama* are copies of documents from the *Archivo General de Indias* because local documents from the sixteenth century were lost. Other two sources of original documents from the sixteenth century are *Cartas privadas de Emigrantes a Indias* from Enrique Otte, and *Indios y negros en Panama en los siglos XVI y XVII* by Carol F. Jopling. Finally, the British Library also holds Spanish documents, however only one was used in this dissertation.

The archival documents consulted are from in different classes. The documents related to administration of Spanish colonies are: Patronato, Signatura, and Justicia. The documents from Panama, Lima, and Guatemala were written by these Audiencias and they are related to administration. The documents from Contaduria and Contratacion are usually related to taxes, testaments, and commercial contracts.

Archives and Abbreviations

AGI: Archivo General de Indias in Seville
ANP: Archivo Nacional de Panama in Panama City
AGN: Archivo General de la Nacion in Bogota
SECONDARY SOURCES


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Thrower, John (2005). Unedited manuscript of Thrower’s travel to Nombre de Dios.


VITA

Ms. Salamanca-Heyman was born in Bogota, Colombia. She graduated from the Universidad de Los Andes in Bogota in 2000 with a major in Anthropology. While in Colombia she worked in historical archaeology in Cartagena, Villa de Leyva, and Bogota. In 2002, she entered the M.A.-PhD program in the Department of Anthropology at the College of William and Mary. She received her M.A. degree in 2004. Her M.A. thesis is “St. Eustatius and the Caribbean Trade System: A Study of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Coins from the Caribbean”.