

A New View of Slave Exportation from Nicaragua in the 16th Century

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Abstract: Standard view is that Nicaragua's Indian population severely decreased after the Conquest because of massive slave exportation. A review of existing ship departures, *zarpes*, for the period of 1539-1542, when slave exportation was occurring large scale, demonstrated that 601 Indians were exported from Nicaragua, that data compiled by a resident judge who was looking for violation of laws to prosecute the slave exporters. This studied applied an interplay between the historical data and the archaeological data that offered greater potential for innovative insights than does either discipline individually; as an academic discipline these studies are referred to as "ethnohistory". Utilizing this approach, the review of the number of ships needed for massive slave exportation disclosed that the required number of vessels was not available at any time during the Colonial period. Finally, the Nicaraguan encomenderos had small *encomiendas*, which were needed to generate income for the encomenderos, and were unlikely to export their own Indian encomendero when it would severely affect their own incomes.

Keywords: Ethnohistory; Slave Exportation; *Zarpes*; Ship Manifests; *Encomiendas*; Ship Destinations; Indian Passengers.

Un nuevo punto de vista sobre la exportación de esclavos en Nicaragua durante el siglo XVI

Resumen: La perspectiva aceptada es que la población de indios de Nicaragua declinó fuertemente después de la conquista, debido a la exportación masiva de esclavos indígenas. Un análisis de los zarpes de navíos durante el periodo 1539-1542, cuando la exportación ocurrió de forma masiva, mostró que 601 indígenas fueron exportados desde Nicaragua, estos datos fueron compilados por un juez de residencia

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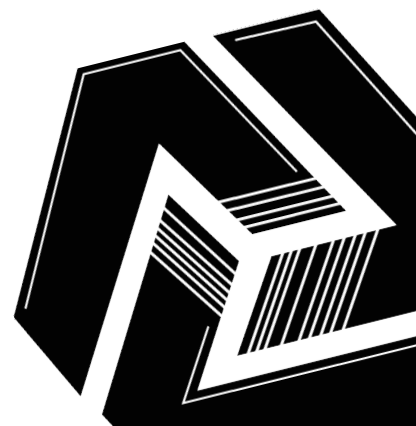
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que buscaba violaciones de la ley para castigar a los exportadores. Este estudio aplicó una interacción entre datos históricos y datos arqueológicos que ofrecieron gran potencial en cuanto a percepciones novedosas que las que ofrece cada disciplina de manera individual. A estos estudios, como una disciplina académica, se les conoce como “etnohistoria”. El cálculo del número de navíos necesarios para la exportación masiva de esclavos denota que no hubo navíos suficientes para exportar grandes cantidades de esclavos en ningún momento del periodo Colonial. Finalmente, los encomenderos en Nicaragua tenían encomiendas pequeñas y necesitaban de esclavos para generar ingresos, por lo que la exportación masiva es poco probable, ya que hubiera tenido un efecto negativo en sus ingresos.

Palabras clave: etnohistoria, exportación de esclavos; zarpes; manifiesto de navío; encomiendas; destino de navío; pasajeros indios.

Introduction

Much ink has been spilled regarding the great decrease in the Indian populations in Nicaragua following the conquest. Lange’s earlier research with Handler ([Handler & Lange, 1978](#); [Lange & Carlson, 1985](#); [Lange & Handler, 1985, 2006](#)) regarding slavery in Barbados, demonstrated that the interplay between the historical data and the archaeological data offers greater potential for innovative insights than does either discipline individually. The same combined methodology is applied in this presentation.

Las Casas wrote that 500,000 Indian slaves had been exported to Panama and Peru ([Las Casas, 1992](#)). Radell estimated that 450,000 slaves had been exported from 1527 to 1536 ([Radell, 1976](#)). Oviedo estimated that 400,000 slaves had died in the slave traffic (Newson, 1987). Sherman disagreed and estimated that the total for the slave trade in Central America from 1524 to 1549 had been about 50,000 (Sherman, 1979). MacLeod noted that 200,000 Indians exported from Nicaragua was an estimate overly conservative ([MacLeod, 1978](#)). Newson (1987) resolved that the number of slaves exported was between 200,000 - 500,000 was a reasonable number of slaves exported from Nicaragua until 1542. However, there are no archaeological data from Pacific coastal Nicaragua or Guanacaste (northern Costa Rica) to support an even much smaller number and Werner’s innovative documentary research also supports a much smaller quantity. Up to the present, the historic export of slaves by the Spanish is an activity that is invisible on the landscape.

The Transmission of Silent, Deadly Diseases

Subsequent to his research with Handler, Lange (2004) previously summarized that:

La mayoría de la atención sobre el impacto de las enfermedades de los españoles en la época de la colonia, se ha enfocado en la disminución rápida de la población indígena en las primeras décadas después del Contacto/ Conquista/ Invasión, cal-

culado por la mayoría de los especialistas en más del 90%. Se olvida que los puntos específicos geográficos de entrada de los españoles fueron pocos; no obstante, las redes de intercambios comerciales y contactos sociales previamente mantenidas por los grupos indígenas a través de los milenios, facilitó la dispersión de enfermedades fuertes, provenientes de Europa y África, con resultados desastrosos, antes de cualquier contacto físico y directo.

Datos diversos de zonas distintas de la costa Pacífica del Hemisferio Occidental están dando la impresión que, de manera paralela, en muchos lugares los primeros pueblos encontrados por los españoles en Nicaragua ya tenían reducida la cantidad de sus poblaciones, o estaban totalmente despoblados. Esta ponencia pretende, como primer intento, evaluar el impacto de enfermedades en Nicaragua antes de que Oviedo y Valdez, Córdoba, Pedrarías u otros llegaran. Se toman como modelos y paradigmas los procesos ya documentados para la entrada de los españoles al Valle de México y al estado de California en Estados Unidos. En ambos casos, los datos confirman claramente que el paquete de enfermedades europeas y africanas llegó antes que ellos y tuvieron un impacto profundamente dañino en la población y organización social de las tribus indígenas.

By the time the Native slave trade developed, the greatly reduced numbers of indigenous peoples were almost invisible on the landscape. Just as in Europe during the Black Plague, the seriously ill were probably so weak they could do nothing more with the dead than pile them up or throw them over the edge of a convenient precipice.

As noted above, the population reduction also greatly reduced their potential discovery on the archaeological landscape. The diseases greatly reduced the population available for enslavement and created conflicts between slavers and landowners who raised crops and livestock that also had heavy labor demands.

One clear-cut result from the conquest of Nicaragua by the Spaniards is that the indigenous population plummeted from about 700,000 at the onset of the physical presence of, and the conquest by the Spaniards in 1522, to 42,000 in 1548. The steep population decline was actually counted in the census and *tasación* of Antonio Lopez de Cerrato in 1548, and had declined to even less than 25,000 Indians in the *tasación* of Governor Artieda Cherino by 1581. Cerrato counted every family, and Artieda Cherino counted every Indian.

Archaeology and History

How the large Indian population so precipitously declined is one of the great questions in the proto-historic and early historic periods in Nicaragua and elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere (notwithstanding

the introduction of European diseases to Africa and other parts of the previously unexplored world). The authors submit that the multi-faceted answer may be a bit surprising, based both on negative archaeological evidence and, since the writings of Radell (1976), Newson (1987), and MacLeod (1978), our increased knowledge of the rapid pre-contact spread and impact of European diseases such as *sarampión* [measles], *varicela* [chicken pox], *sífilis* [syphilis], *gripe* [influenza] has highlighted the previously under-estimated regarding how diseases had spread over the existing native trail systems. Ann Ramenofsky's (1987) landmark study "Vectors of Death" was pivotal in raising awareness of the behaviors that facilitated the spread of deadly diseases prior to the physical presence of Europeans in many areas.

While the lack of archaeological discoveries of slaves remains or encampments suggests small, scattered populations, the major problem with estimating the volume of the slave trade from documents is that information about the Nicaraguan slave trade is fragmentary in the decade of the 1520s, is very specific and is not at all in agreement with the generally estimates; in addition to the lack of physical remains, it seems that no one consulted this information in arriving at generalized conclusions about the Nicaraguans slave trade.

Slaving in the Early 16th Century

Slavery during the 1520s was a business that was completely legal under Spanish law and that imposed a tax of 20% in the price of a newly made slave. In 1531 the Spanish Crown stopped the Indian slave trade (3 CS 1, January 25, 1531 in Vega, 1954-1957)¹ but vacillated several times before finally ending the slave trade in the New Laws of 1542 (7 CS 333, November 19, 1542 in Vega, 1954-1957 in Vega, 1954-1957).

The only complete declaration of Indian slavery in early Nicaragua is found in the verification of accounting books and property of decedent Andres de Cereceda (In de Cereceda, 17 CS 302, 1550 in Vega, 1954-1957). Cereceda recorded the receipts of taxes assessed from the sale and branding of Indian slaves (Table 1). It was a taxable event. Spanish law dictated that the *fator*, or work foreman, and the Crown accountant, or their representatives, be present when the Indian was converted into a slave usually by branding on the face with the letter "G" or "R" noting that the slave was a war prisoner, or de *rescate*, or rescued already a slave; women were branded on the thigh. When branded, the owner of the Indian became subject to taxes, 20% of the value of the slave. The process was similar to the taxing of smelted gold in the *Casa Real de Fundición* in Leon.

During the first days of the colony, Andres de Cereceda, as Crown accountant, maintained exact information on all the money that was owed to the Crown. In the subsequent *residencia* directed by his successor and mortal enemy, Diego de la Tobilla, there was not found a grain, or *tomín* of gold lacking and unac-

¹ For the purposes of this work, 3 CS 1 means volume three of the Colección Somoza, page one. The Colección contains 17 volumes of 869 transcribed documents from 1504 to 1551. It contains 10,053 pages of documents. It was compiled by Andres Vega Bolanos, Nicaraguan ambassador to Spain of Anastasio Somoza García. For a guide to the Colección, see Werner (2016).

Table 1: Summary of Taxes Assessed on Indians Converted into Slaves from July, 1527 to December, 1528 (Vega, 1954-1957).

Data	Pesos*
Summary of slaves' tax assessment and Paid	7,368p
Summary of slaves' Tax Assessment Not Paid	287p
Total Tax Assessment of Slaves, Paid and Unpaid	7,645p
Average of Tax Assessment Per Slave	= - 1p
Estimated Number of Slaves Created, Branded and Tax Assessed, From July, 1527 to December, 1528	7,645 Indians

* One peso means a value, not necessarily a coin, used throughout the Spanish Empire. It had two equivalent values: it was equivalent to 450 *maravedís*, the standard coin of Castille, established by King Juan IV on or about 1474. It had little value, usually calculated roughly to be between five and 10 cents US. Because there were few coins in actual use in the new colonies, the colonists used the idea of the same *peso de buen oro*, consisting of eight *tomínes*, a medieval apothecary unit. Each *tomín* was comprised of 12 *granos*, perhaps based upon the weight of one grain of wheat. The two types of *pesos de buen oro* were used interchangeably. How the colonial accountants carried their books, using Roman numerals, and converted back and forth between *maravedís* and *tomínes*, using two types of *pesos*, is not known. The *peso* based on *tomínes* had a base of 96, not 100. The Crown officials were paid three times a year in *maravedís*. The *Colección Somoza* contains both the paystubs of each Crown official, and the complete books of accounting of two Crown treasurers, Andres Tellez and Andres de Cereceda. The *tomín* is still used as a unit of measure in the upper reaches of the Coco River to measure alluvial gold. As a practical measure 1.5 *tomínes* are the equivalent of one gram. The standard for setting small scales is a spent .22 long rifle casing, which weighs five *tomínes*.

counted for, attesting to the exact manner in which Cereceda maintained the Crown accounting records. Undoubtedly Cereceda would have been severely punished, or beheaded, if there were any evidence of illegal slave trade or embezzlement of Crown funds. The records of making Indians into slaves from July 1527 to December 1528 are as exact as any source in existence.

Since slavery was completely legal at that time and Indians were quite numerous, it is probable that the amount of 7,600 Indians represents exactly the number of Indians that 150-200 Spaniards could enslave, process and export annually.

During the decade of 1530, the evidence of whole scale slavery operations is only found in the *relaciones* of Las Casas, since there is little mention of the slave trade in the *Colección Somoza* (Vega, 1954-1957), the major sources of documentation already transcribed of early Nicaragua, to 1551. During that decade, Las Casas wrote that Nicaragua had exported at least 37,000 Indians (Newson, 1987). Royal scribe, Francisco Sanchez, enemy of Governor Rodrigo de Contreras, wrote that Contreras had permitted the export of 2,000 Indians, in an unsuccessful attempt to terminate the governorship of Contreras with a *residencia*.

Another report of illegal export of Indian slaves is found in the case of La Corona vs Bartoleme Ruiz and Others, 2 CS 28 (July 3, 1529 in Vega, 1954-1957), where Ruiz, ship captain and agent of the Pizarro and Almagro brothers, boarded 89 Indians and an unspecified number of Spaniards without following the legal process of obtaining a license to sail from the port of El Realejo.

A more fertile field of accusations is found in the residences of Rodrigo de Contreras (9 CS 1, 1544 in Vega, 1954-1957), Pedro de los Rios, and aguacil Luis de Guevara (10 CS 1, 1544 in Vega, 1954-1957). The three residencies took place at Leon Viejo in June-August, by Judge of *residencia* and Oidor Diego de Herrera. An experienced lawyer and inspector, Herrera, was sent to Nicaragua for the sole purpose of conducting the three *residencias*. Although Herrera probably started the process being a neutral judge and inspector of the Contreras administration, the crude attempts of Contreras to bribe Herrera made him an implacable enemy of Contreras and his allies. When Herrera discovered the length and depth of the widespread of corruption and destructiveness of Contreras, he did everything he could do to bring to justice Contreras and his son in law, who may have been older than he, Pedro de los Rios. Herrera, after a process that resembles a Grand Jury Indictment, formally accused Rios of permitting old conquistador Diego de Castañeda of enslaving a large number of Indians to conquer the area of the mining town of Nueva Segovia. Herrera found Rios guilty of this charge, and two other counts of running illegal slaving operations. He also found Contreras guilty of 42 counts of criminal activity, including four counts of letting illegal slaves leave Nicaragua without legal permission to do so, and that never returned to Nicaragua. Herrera sent the entire list of guilty findings to the *Consejo de las Indias*, and never got a response.

In spite of voluminous documentation- it took compiler Andres Vega Bolaños (1954-1957) 900 pages of printed material to reproduce the entire *residencia* of Contreras- Herrera, who clearly hated Contreras, did not find proof of large scale slave exportation after 1535. But to prove what he could, Herrera produced as evidence some slave exportation in the ship manifests and permission to sail, called, *zarpes*, of 44 ships sailing from Nicaragua, in the residencies of Contreras and Rios. A close examination of those manifests and *zarpes* reveals that Contreras was guilty of permitting Spaniards leaving Nicaragua to take with them their personal slaves or girlfriends, and never collected the necessary bond to allow Indians to leave Nicaragua, the bond of which would be forfeited if the Indian did not return. Most of the ships, with the exception of one galleon owned by Pedro de los Rios, were incapable of holding more than a dozen or so Indians, along with crew, livestock, and paying passengers.

The total number of Indians that are found on those manifests and never returned to Nicaragua, from May 27, 1539 to August 3, 1543, is 601 Indians. It appears that no researcher considered the logistical problems presented to a slave exporting enterprise in Nicaragua. For example, the very small number of Spaniards in early Nicaragua, the matter of prevailing Papagayo winds, the small number of sailing vessels available and their small size, all argue against large scale slave exportation that is proposed by various authors. None of this is in agreement of the number of slaves exported reported by Newson, for example, of 200,000-500,000 Indians exported from Nicaragua up to 1544 (Newson, 1987). Two explanations are possible: either the embarking ship left without any documentation at all and the mortal enemies of Rios and Contreras suffered from collective amnesia, or the exportation of Indian slaves was not a cause of massive depopulation of Nicaragua as posited by various historians and researchers.

A comparison between the Indian population at the onset of the conquest in 1522 and the populations of these same *pueblos* in November of 1548, gives a clear idea of the extent of depopulation. There is a general consensus of a population of 700,000 Indians in western Nicaragua at the onset of the conquest, and a population of 42,000 Indians actually counted in the Cerrato *tasación* of November, 1548.

Further, the most convincing explanation of the depopulation is found in fragmentary accounts of epidemics that occurred up to 1548.

As hard as Herrera tried, he could not find evidence of massive slave exportation. For example, Bartolome de Las Casas lived in Nicaragua in 1535 and reported an exportation of 25,000 Indians. At the same time, Francisco Sanchez, royal scribe lived in Nicaragua, fought with Contreras and was removed from his position as royal scribe so that he had no way to support himself. He was one of the *vecinos* that wrote the Crown and asked for the Contreras regime to be ended and residencies to be implemented for Contreras and Rios. He reported various ugly incidents, such as the opening of a bordello in El Realejo by Isabel de Bobadilla, widow of Pedrarias and mother in law of Contreras. In the same year that Las Casas reported the illegal exportation of 25,000 Indians, Sanchez reported the illegal exportation of 2,000 Indians. Although Las Casas was much better known, it is possible that Francisco Sanchez made a more accurate report on the number of illegal exportation of slaves.

Herrera, in his hatred of Contreras, did his best at documenting illegal slave exportation in his effort to oust Contreras and Rios from power. He compiled all the ship manifests and *zarpes* of ships leaving Nicaragua- El Realejo and Granada- from May 22, 1539 to August 3, 1543. In addition to containing basic data on the number of sailors, passengers, and ship owners, the registers also contain all the documents necessary for the ship to leave port. An example of the legal process and documentation is found regarding the ship San Miguel, that left El Realejo for Guatemala in October, 1542. To comply with the necessary requirements, the following document was included in the ship registry:

*En la çibdad de leon desde prouincia de nicaragua dies e seis días del mes de octubre de mill e quinientos e quarenta años ante mi martin minbreño escriuano de su magestad e escriuano publico del numero desta çibdad e testigos estando en la plaça publica de esta çibdad se dio por alonso felipe pretogonero primero pregon los suso qontenidos en este registro e no hubo quien les pidiese cosa algun testigos Felipe de miranda y Rodrigo de castro e Antonio rodrigues _____
E después de lo suso dicho en la dicha en la dicha çibdad de león en dies e siete de octubre del dicho año ante mi el dicho escriuano e testigos se dio segundo pregon a los contenidos en este registro por el dicho pregonero e no obo quien les pidiese cosa alguna testigos fernando de haro e Felipe de mirando e lonso çerdan e otros que ende estaban _____*

E después de los suso dicho en la dicha çibdad de leon en diez e ocho dias del mes de octubre se dio tercero pregon las dichas personas por bos de alonso felipe pregonero e no hubo quien nada les pidiese e demandase testigos Rodrigo gonsales e francisco peres e juan de salazar _____

Diose liçençia e registro a los qontenidos en este registro por el dicho señor tesore-ro e teniente de gobernador firmado e de mi martin mimbrenõ escribuano e porque fueron dados tres pregones e no hubo quien les pidiese cosa alguna ese le mando al maestre que so pena de quinientos pesos para la camara de su magestad no llevase otra personas ni pieça ni cosa proybida syn licencia e que llegados a guatemala antes que salten en tierra presenten este registro ante la justicia para que vean sy llevan otra cosa o pieça o cosa proybida syn licencia sola dicha pena la qual licencia e registro se dio en leon a veynte e dos de octubre de mill e quinientos e quarenta e dos años. Testigos francisco peres e francisco rodrigues e gonsalo hernandes (10 CS 20-21 in Vega, 1954-1957).

Another item found in the registries was the testimony of the *tenedor*, or trustee, of property of deceased Spaniards, that confirmed that no departing passenger had any property or money that was property of decedents, nor that any departing Spaniard owed money to any decedent. One of the continuing problems with *vecinos* was that they eventually died, leaving property in the colonies when they had heirs in Spain. The Crown, on September 19, 1539 (6 CS51 et seq in Vega, 1954-1957) passed a law regarding the administration of property of decedents in the colonies. A small committee was formed to marshal the assets of the decedent, sell by auction all of the assets of the decedent, and send the money to the heirs through the Casa de Contratación. To comply with this law, in the register of the ship El Salvador, that was to leave for Panama in May of 1543, we find the recorded testimony of one Pedro de Buytrago: “*Yo pedro de buytrago tenedor de los difuntos digo que ninguno destes desta otra parte qontenidos no deven ninguna cosa a los difuntos ques fecha en treze dias del mes de mayo año de mil e quinientos e quarenta e tres. Pedro de buytrago*” (10 CS 16 in Vega, 1954-1957).

There is other information regarding the matter of ship’s cargos. There were very few exports of basic grains or general cargo in the registries. There is only one registry that contains a cargo of 200 *quintales* of *maíz*. First, Nicaragua between 1539 and 1543 had an economic crisis: the rapid decline in number of Indians made it difficult to produce basic grains to export. It was a time when the *vecinos* were seeing the end of the ability of the Indians to produce an excess of basic grains or livestock or salted meat that could be exported. Secondly, although it is not clear in the registries, it appears that Nicaragua was not the point of origin of many ships, but a stopping point on the itinerary of the voyages, that possibly started in Guatemala, or less probably New Spain, and ended in Peru, with another stop in Panama. In vain, one finds evidence of any Hispanic export agriculture in Nicaragua.

What one does see is evidence of some economic activity between the *vecinos* of Nicaragua and other *vecinos* in Panama and Peru. This should not be a surprise as Nicaragua was conquered by the same Spaniards that had previously conquered Panama, and many *vecinos* in Nicaragua left for Peru when the promise of booty appeared in the Andes and had disappeared completely in Nicaragua. By 1533, Nicaragua was bankrupt and the interim governor, Francisco de Castañeda ordered that *vecinos* could not sell livestock or property to *vecinos* going to Peru. He also ordered at one point that all *vecinos* had to live in El Realejo (see [Werner, 2000](#)).

See, for example:

Registro el dicho maestro Rodrigo Roldan que resçibio de pedro la palma vecino desta çibdad noventa e seis pesos e dos tomines de oro fino marcado de la marca real para lo dar y entregar a luys sanchez dalvo en panama e pedro ramón en su nombre van a riesgo del dicho luys sanches e su conpañia que son de resto de vn cargazon quel dicho maestro traxo el dicho pedro de la palma lo que registro antel escriuano yuso escripto en veynte e siete de abril de mil e quinientos e quarenta e tres años testigos gonçalo hernandes e gaspar de contreras e lo firmo el dicho maestro.....

yten este dicho dia registro el dicho Rodrigo Roldan maestro que lleva en su poder de mayor de benevides mujer de pedro hernandes harriero setenta e siete pesos que cobro de bollanos maestro de çiertas mercaderias que llevo al peru van a riesgo de la dicha mayor de venevides testigos los dichos. Rodrigo Roldan (10 CS 19 in [Vega, 1954-1957](#)).

Other little used historical sources are the demands and lawsuits that the *vecinos* filed among them. The *vecinos* in Nicaragua in this time period probably numbered around 150 persons, including a few women like Ana Ximenez and the wife of Gonzalo Cano, reputed to be an adulteress. The *vecinos* were in two very hostile groups who stole from each other and killed each other, including quartering their dead enemies and hanging the arms and legs at the entrances of town. The idea of homogeneous groups of Spaniards working together to conquer and enslave the Indians just did not happen. There was probably a third group who tried to stay clear of the vicious conflicts between the two groups. The appearance of these two groups is evident in how President Cerrato divided up the *encomiendas* roughly equally between the pro and anti Contreras factions, and still gave 25 percent of the existing *encomiendas* to the Crown.

These old, dusty lawsuits are an invaluable source to reconstruct the early conflicts in the colony that do not show up anywhere else. The legal system permitted an appeal of any legal determination to a court of appeal². And after receiving an unfavorable sentence from the governor or *Audiencia*, the loser could re-

²To see the complexity of Spanish colonial law, in matters of civil procedure, see the *Recopilación De Las Leyes Destos Reynos*, quarto libro, tit. 1-33, that contain over 100 clauses that define the totality of civil procedure and law. To see the complexity

claim his rights and send documents, including a claim of appeal, on a departing ship. The Easter Uprising of 1543 that was unsuccessful in terminating the power of the Contreras family, produced claims of appeal that got to the *Audencia* of Panama and finally to the Ecclesiastical Court in Madrid. The ship registry of the ship San Salvador that left Nicaragua heading toward Panama in May of 1543 contained several of the documents generated by that uprising³.

Lleva Baltasar rodrigues las cartas y envoltorios para luys sanches a arias de azevedo e cartas de justicia contra calero e ynformaçiones e de los alborotos quel bachiller mendavia cabso e muertes de hombres e lleva ansimismo vn proceso original quel dicho mendavia hurto e pedro ruis secretario de la abdenci rel de panamá ques el proceso ques el pleito en el qonsejo e justicia de leon e el gobernador Rodrigo de contreras tratavan con el dicho bachiller mendavia sobre la judicatura eclesiástica e deanazgo que va çerrado e sellado (10 CS 17 in Vega, 1954-1957).

The information of slave exportation that is found in those registries probably was not sufficient to prove the massive export of slaves that Herrera advocated, but it did bring to light other facts regarding the relations between Indians and Spaniards. The registries stated the exact numbers of Indians that left on each ship. The majority of the Indians appear with indigenous names and sometimes with their village of origin. The registries also state whether the Indians were male or female. For example, many *vecinos* took one or two women with them when traveling to Panama and Peru. A typical observation is found in the ship registry of the ship Nuestra Señora that left for Peru in October of 1542. The ship *maestre*, or captain, Nicolas de Ybarra, left with one Indian woman, permitted with a surety bond, as did another sailor Juan de Guevara, who left with a female Indian slave from Guatemala. Of the passengers, one Hernando needed three women for the voyage, and his friend Anton Pie de Hierro left with another three women (10 CS 8 in Vega, 1954-1957). In viewing the names of the *vecinos* that left with women, it appears that many were members of Contreras' Alliance, and various had *encomiendas* and the means to obtain wealth. The *vecinos* did not have the superstition of the English that thought women were bad luck on a ship, and may have passed their time on the high seas happy with their Indian *compañeras*.

How the *vecinos* could leave Nicaragua with women on the high seas is another interesting matter. In the decade of the 1530s, the Crown had passed laws to protect the Indians, prohibit slavery, and also prohibit their exportation. But the laws of Spain had another valuable legal tool to avoid the effect of the *cédula* of the king: the law of suretyship. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Spain had a well-developed law of suretyship. When applied to the Indians the solution was to formulate the legal fiction that the Indians were not exported permanently but only for a time, with the bond forfeiture set at 100 pesos each for the Indians

of criminal procedure, see the *Recopilación De Las Leyes Destos Reynos*, octavo libro, tit. 1-26, that also has over a hundred provisions of criminal procedure. This meant that in any case, a lawyer with imagination could find a reason to appeal a case, no matter how flimsy that case.

³For more information of this dispute, see, Werner (2000) y Zuñiga (1998).

not returned. This suretyship was guaranteed by one of two other *vecinos*. This was considered sufficient for one or more male or female Indians to freely leave on a ship with all legal requisites:

*En lo xagueyes termino de leon tres de agosto de mil e quinientos e quarenta tres años ante mi martin mimbrenño escriuano de su magestad e testigos yseo de santia-go vezino de leon se obligo que por quel señor thesorero da licencia que lleve al pero estas pieças de indios e yndias de suso conthenidos que son en esta memoria que ella se obligaba e obligo en tal manera de las traer o embiar a esta provincia do las lleva so pena de pagar por ellas por cada vna çien pesos para la cámara de us magestad e para ello dio poder a las justiçias de su magestad e para ello dio poder a las justiçias de su magestad e como cosa sentenciada y cosa juzgada e renuncio las leyes de los enperadores e renuncio su propio fuero e lo firmo testigos pero alvares decamargo e alonso torrejón e Rodrigo gonsales e otros que ende estavan e que traerá los dichos las quales pieças traerá dentro de dos años luego siguientes testigos los dichos _____
Yseo de Santiago _____ (10 CS 6 in Vega, 1954-1957).*

Another form of suretyship was the following:

*Fio pedro de la palma que dos pieças que lleva francisco benabente vna yndia e un yndio libres los traerá segundo dicho es so la dicha pena so lo firmo. Testigos los dichos pedro la palma.
En leon veynte e seis de abril de mill e quinientos e quarenta e tres años paresçio francisco Benavente e presento antel señor gobernador este indio e esta yndia que llevo al peru dio la fianza por ninguna. Testigo gomes arias (10 CS 487-488 in Vega, 1954-1957).*

Another interesting characteristic is that one sees, for the first time, the preferences of the *vecinos* within the four ethnic dominant groups to work on the ships, to work for the *vecinos*, and also to handle their livestock, particularly the horses. Although the Chorotegas were the masters of making things of vegetable fiber such as head stalls, breast collars, ropes, hammocks, etc., the Maribios were preferred for personal service.

For example, when Pedro Orejon left Nicaragua in the ship San Nicolas in March of 1542, he took along several Indians:

Pero orejon dos indios chontales e uno de mexico y el cacique aliçete que fue condenado a muerte que fue desterrado de la tierra por no matalle a una esclava de guatimala ysabel e vn yndio esclavo de guaxaca que va con una hija suya e lleva

mas tres yndio esclavo de guaxaca que va con una hija suya e lleva ms tres indios e dos yndias de sus repartimientos con finças llamados Ybigalma vno e otro quiaqui e teliça ete e ana e lyusa yndias de maçitega e juana guerra e quatro negros e lleva vna yndia esclva de francisco carrillos con dos hijos e una hija suya e vna yndia libre de guatimala (10 CS 478-479 in Vega, 1954-1957).

Macitega was a large village, now extinct, possibly peopled with an ethnic group, the Mazatecas, linguistically related to the Maribios and still living in northern Oaxaca. It was located about 10 km south-west of Chinandega; Telica is a reference possibly of female Indians from the pueblo of Telica, made up of Maribios Indians, located to the west of Subtiava, and still in existence. Regarding the use of Maribios Indians to manage the horses that the *vecinos* took to Peru, see the registry of the ship Nuestra Señora that left Nicaragua toward Peru in October of 1542:

En dia yseo de Santiago que vna yndia francisca e otra mtea e catalina e martin e diego e mateo e colo quespal e teguichimal indios naturales desta tierra libres que son seys indios y yndias que lleva Felipe de miranda al peru para servicio de sus caballos e navio que dentro de vn ño primero sygiuente los traerá a esta prouincia so pena de pagar por cada vna pieça cienpesos para la camarde su magestad e para ello se obligo en forma e dio poder a las justiçias e renuncio las leyes de los enperadores como cosa sentenciada e pasada en cosa juzgada e otorgo carta executoria e lo firmo de su nombre testigos Felipe de miranda e juan babtista e diego de chaves, yseo de santigo (10 CS 10 in Vega, 1954-1957).

The great irony of Judge Herrera's work is that he could not find evidence of massive exportation of Indians from Nicaragua in spite of having complete access to all possible documents. Herrera hated and loathed Contreras and his alliance, and later had his judicial career torpedoed by Contreras in a phony lawsuit. The totality of exported Indians was 601 in the period of 1539 to 1543, even under a form possibly legal or, at least, arguably legal bond. In spite of having mortal enemies in the form of judges investigating them in both Leon Viejo and Granada, they never had to defend themselves against the charges of massive Indian exportation, as should have happened and if there had been massive Indian exportation.

The identity of the ships and their owners does give an idea of who were the magnates of transport in Central America. The following table (Table 2) summarizes the names of the ships and their owners.

There were a total of 23 ships engaged in ocean going traffic that landed in Nicaragua. It is clear that Pedro de los Rios was the first ship magnate in Nicaragua: he had a galleon, the Santa Esteban de la Cruz, the *navio*, the San Nicolas, and a frigate.

Table 2*: Ship Registries.

Ship Name	Years In Nicaragua	Owner	Ship Type
La Concepción	1539, 1542, 1543**	Miguel de la Cuesta***	Navío
San Juan	1539, 1541, 1542	Diego Gaytan****	Navío
San Miguel	1540, 1543	Hernando de Melara	
Todos Santos	1540	Miguel Dalva (1540)*****	Navío
Santiago	1540, 1542, 1543	Pero Sanchez Dalv y Pero de la Palma	Navío
Tres Hermanos	1540, 1542	Maestre Bartolome Mafla*****	Navío
San Lázaro	1540, 1541, 1543	Maestre Jacone Niñerdo	Navío
La Merced	1540	Juan Garcia	?
San Nicolás	1541, 1542	Pedro de los Ríos	Navío
Santa Lucía	1541	Maestre Jun Batiste Jinoves	Navío
Buena Ventura	1541	Alonso Gomes de Herrera	Bergantín
San Jorge	1541	Maestre Antonio	Navío
San Alfonso	1541, 1542, 1543	Diego Gaytan (1543)	Navío
Fragata	1541	Pedro de los Ríos	Fragata
Nuestra Señora de los Reyes	1542	Maestre Nicolás Ybarra	Navío
Santa María de los Reyes	1543	Luis de Guevara	Bergantín
Espíritu Santo	1542	Francisco de Santander	Navío
San Jeronimo	1542	Juan Alvares	Navío
Fragata	1542	Alonso Calero	Fragata
San Esteban de la Cruz	1542	Pedro de los Ríos	Galeón
San Salvador	1543	Baltasar Rodríguez	Navío
Guadalupe	1543	Capitán López Vez	Navío
Nuestra señora de Buen Esperanza	1539	Alvar Núñez	Navío

*Tables two through six are summaries of zarpes and related documents of all ship arrivals and departures from Nicaragua, 1539-1542. They are found scattered in two major residencies, *In Re Rodrigo de Contreras*, 9 CS 1 (1544 in Vega, 1954-1957), and his *aguacil*, Luis de Guevara, 10 CS 168 (1544 in Vega, 1954-1957). For each zarpe there is listed its exact citation. The zarpes were compiled by Oydor Diego de Herrera, who wanted to include everything in the files to amply demonstrate to the Crown the guilt of Contreras, Pedro de los Rios, Contreras' son in law, and Luis de Guevara, their *aguacil* and strong arm enforcer. Werner reorganized the data from those zarpes into tables two through six to specifically address the content of the tables.

**In 1543 the owners were Diego Rodríguez and Periañez.

***In 1542 the owner was Juan de Castillo.

****Because of the persons named, it is possible that Pedro de los Ríos had an interest in the ship.

*****When the owner was not named the ship's captain was placed in the table.

*****The register does not mention the destination of the ship. No matter, the passenger list includes Gerónimo Cordovin, who was sent to Panama as a prisoner, and Alfonso Tello, both partisans of the Dean de Nicaragua, Pedro de Mendavia. They were sent to Panama in 1543 to give proofs in various lawsuits against Mendavia. See Werner (2000).

Possibly he also had an interest in the ship, *Todos Santos*. Of the ship captains, Diego Gaytan was the busiest in sailing vessels and especially in the Pacific Ocean, called in the documents *el Mar del Sur*. And one sees the time that it took to travel to another destination and return to El Realejo. The *navio* *El Santiago* sailed from El Realejo toward Panama on March 30, 1543, and returned to El Realejo by July 17, 1543, ready to sail again to Panama. In spite of the Papagayo winds, the *Santiago* sailed and returned to El Realejo in 100 days, more or less.

Regarding the matter of the place of Nicaragua in the maritime transportation network of imperial Spain, one sees the departures and destinations of Nicaraguan ships (Table 3).

One sees for the first time the seasons of departure affected by the Papagayo winds. Between December and May of every year the Papagayo winds blow from the northeast with powerful wind gusts. The tendency was to push sailing ships offshore towards Australia⁴. With this difficulty, few ships would venture on the high seas. In reality, of the 44 *zarpes* from Nicaragua, only eight left during the time of the Papagayo winds, Xagueyes or Puerto de la Posesión, and the port of Granada. Of the two ports, El Realejo was the most used (Table 4).

Also, the ship destinations describe the place of Nicaragua within the colonial system and networks that the *vecinos* had with other colonies (Table 5).

Obviously the destinations of Panama and Peru were the most popular. In the registries there are found various personal business transactions between *vecinos* of Nicaragua and Peru. Given that the *Audiencia* of Panama governed Nicaragua, at least until June, 1543, there is also traffic of documents and lawsuits in the registries. Of the other destinations such as Nombre de Dios, it is obvious that the port of Granada was of little importance. Similarly, New Spain and Guatemala had little importance in Nicaraguan trade affairs. Finally, the destinations of Las Barbacoas and Cali have no explanation in known documentation.

The registries do not identify the cargos of most of the ships (Table 6). For example, of the 44 departures only four indicate cargos: The *San Lorenzo* of April 20, 1541 had a cargo of cattle of Cristobal de Burgos; the *San Alfonso* of October 20, 1541 had 42 *pipas*, or large tanks of water; the *Santa Maria de los Reyes* of June 15, 1542 had 150 fanegas of *maíz* and 200 birds (perhaps chickens); and the *San Miguel* of April 22, 1543 had certain clothes that came in a box or large package.

The registries are also not always clear regarding passengers, Indians as well as *vecinos* (Table 6). For example, of the 44 departures there were a total of 682 *vecinos*, or an average of 15.5 each departing ship. On these same ships, there were a total of 601 Indians, or an average of 13.6 per embarking vessel. The

⁴See Table 6 for a summary of the passengers and cargos of the ships.

Table 3: Summary of Maritime Activity, 1539-1543.

Date of departure	Citation of document of <i>zarpe</i> and related documents (Vega, 1954-1957)	Name	Origin	Destination
1539				
22 de mayo	9 CS 34	Nuestra Señora (navío)	Realejo	Panamá
16 de octubre	9 CS 42	San Juan (navío)	Realejo	Panamá
1540				
2 de mayo	10 CS 510	San Lázaro (navío)	Realejo	?
8 de mayo	10 CS 513	La Merced (nao)	Realejo	Panamá
31 de mayo	10 CS 509	Tres Hermanos (navío)	Realejo	Panamá
29 de junio	10 CS 498	Todos Santos (navío)	Realejo	Perú
16 de octubre	10 CS 20	San Miguel (barco)	Realejo	Guatemala
26 de octubre	10 CS 507	Santiago (navío)	Realejo	Panamá
1541				
6 de marzo	10 CS 478	San Nicolás (navío)	Realejo	Perú
20 de abril	10 CS 482	San Lázaro (navío)	Realejo	Panamá
13 de julio	10 CS 476	San Juan (navío)	Realejo	Buena Ventura (provincia de Las Barvacoas)
13 de julio	10 CS 473	San Juan (navío)	Realejo	Guatemala
30 de Septiembre	10 CS 480	Santa Luzia (navío)	Realejo	Nueva España
20 de octubre	10 CS 500	San Alfonso (navío)	Realejo	Perú
21 de octubre	10 CS 484	Buena Ventura (bergantín)	Granada	Nombre de Dios
3 de noviembre	10 CS 518	Fragata de Pedro de los Ríos	Granada	Nombre de Dios
4 de noviembre	10 CS 489	San Jorge (navío)	Realejo	(?)
1542				
21 de Enero	9 CS 35	La Concepción (navío)	Realejo	(?)
22 de Febrero	10 CS 511	San Jeronimos (navío)	Realejo	(?)
25 de marzo	10 CS 493	Los Tres Hermanos (navío)	Realejo	Guatemala
22 de mayo	9 CS 35	La Concepción (navío)	Realejo	Panamá
5 de junio	10 CS 488	San Nicolás (navío)	Realejo	Panamá
5 de junio	10 CS 8	Nuestra Señora(navío)	Realejo	Perú
9 de junio	10 CS 494	Los Tres Hermanos(navío)	Realejo	Perú
15 de Junio	10 CS 514	Santa Maria(navío)	Granada	Nombre de Dios
1542				
22 de Junio	10 CS 516	San Esteban (galeón)	Realejo	Perú
5 de julio	10 CS 513	Fragata de Calero	Granada (?)	Nombre de Dios (?)
11 de julio	10 CS 496	San Juan (navío)	Realejo	Perú

Table 3 (continuation): Summary of Maritime Activity, 1539-1543.

Date of departure	Citation of document of <i>zarpe</i> and related documents (Vega, 1954-1957)	Name	Origin	Destination
1542				
17 de julio	10 CS 485	Santiago (navío)	Realejo	Perú
19 de julio	10 CS 505	San Alfonso (navío)	Realejo	Perú
20 de julio	10 CS 505	Espíritu Santo (navío)	Realejo	Panamá
10 de agosto		San Juan (navío)	Realejo (?)	Las Barvacoas e provincia de Cali e Popoyan
11 de octubre		Nuestra Señora (navío)	Realejo	Perú
18 de octubre		San Juan (navío)	Realejo	Perú (?)
1543				
30 de enero	10 CS 491	Santa Maria (bergantín)	Granada	Nombre de Dios
30 de marzo	9 CS 39	Santiago (nao)	Realejo	Panamá
22 de abril	10 CS 17	San Miguel (barco)	Realejo	Panamá*
2 de mayo	9 CS 33	Guadalupe (navío)	Realejo	Guatemala y Nueva España
10 de mayo	10 CS 14	San Salvador (navío)	Realejo	Panamá
11 de mayo	10 CS 11	San Miguel (navío)	Realejo	Panamá
17 de julio	10 CS 12	La concepción (navío)	Realejo	Panamá
17 de julio	9 CS 36	Santiago (navío)	Realejo	Perú
17 de julio	10 CS 4	Santa Maria (navío)	Realejo	Perú
21 de julio	9 CS 44	San Lázaro (navío)	Realejo	Guatemala
31 de julio	10 CS 23	San Alfonso (navío)	Realejo	Perú
3 de agosto	10 CS 4	Santa Maria (navío)	Realejo	Perú
Salida sin fecha				
20 de Mayo	9 CS 36	De La Merced (navío)	Realejo	(?)

*Werner has experienced the Papagayo winds on a commercial fishing boat in both the Caribbean as well as on the Pacific Ocean. Without a diesel engine it is very difficult to go to Panama or Peru from Nicaragua during the Papagayo winds.

number of persons on each ship leaving port vacillated between 11 and 65 persons.

The registries of ships departing Nicaragua in the first half of the 16th century contain valuable information to understand the colony of Nicaragua and its scale and place in the Spanish colonial system and the magnates that controlled maritime activity from Nicaragua. One sees a colony that exported almost no basic grains and where Indians in very small numbers were exported under the legal fiction of surety bonds. Perhaps the great utility of Judge Herrera's registry compilation will be to serve comparing Nicaragua's export and shipping activity with other colonies in the 16th century. There is no proof of the massive Indian exportation that has dominated much research.

Table 4: The Frequency of Ships Embarking from the Two Nicaraguan Ports.

Port	Number of Embarkations (N = 44)	Percentage
El Realejo	5	89 %
Granada	39	11 %

In conclusion, between 1539 and 1543, the 23 ships that departed from Nicaragua demonstrate the reality of maritime activity during those four years, with 44 *zarpes*, an average of one *zarpe*, or departure, every month. The time for travel to Panama and return to El Realejo was 100 days, which would set a limit of three trips per year per ship to Panama. It is calculated that the time for travel to and return from Peru was one year per trip. There is the reality of sailing in the Papagayo winds, and the very small number of Indians that traveled to Panama and Peru. And while the ship departures herein noted took place, when there has been speculation about great numbers of Indians exported, little thought may have been given to the small size of the ships and small number of ships available for this oceanic trade. During the four years noted, 682 *vecinos* and 601 Indians departed Nicaragua by means of sailing ships, an average of 15 *vecinos* and 13 Indians per departure. There was only one galleon, the San Esteban, owned by Pedro de los Rios, the first shipping magnate of Nicaragua. He had three ships in total. His galleon, capable of exporting many Indians, only made one trip in the four years noted. Finally, the port of El Realejo was the most popular and most used.

It is very possible that there were other voyages not documented that took unauthorized slaves. But one must think about real numbers of both Indians and ships. At the beginning of the conquest in 1522, there were no ocean-going ships in Nicaragua. Gil Gonzalez had to buy a few boats, probably not very large, from Pedrarias, to travel from Panama to Nicaragua. The bills of sale are in the *Colección Somoza*, bought in large numbers of *maravedís*. The *astillero*, or ship building center, of El Realejo was established soon after the conquest but had a very limited capacity for building ships, most likely one at a time. Today it is still the mildly odiferous mangrove swamp that it was all during the 16th century. It had a tiny work place

Table 5: Destination of the Ships that Left Nicaragua (N = 41)*.

Destination	Frequency	Percentage
Perú	15	36.5%
Panamá	13	31.7%
Nombre de Dios	5	12%
Guatemala	4	9.7%
Barbacoas	2	4.8%
Nueva España	2	4.8 %

* Three of the registries did not include the destination

Table 6: Summary of Passengers and Cargos of Departing Ships, 1539-1543 (Vega, 1954-1957).

Ship	Number of Vecinos	Indians	Document	Dinero	Cargo	Total Personas
1539						
Nuestra Señora de Buena Esperanza (9 CS 34) 22 de mayo, 1539	7	9	X		Ninguno	16
San Juan (Navío) (9 CS 42) 16 de octubre, 1539	20	5			Ninguno	25
1540						
San Lázaro (10 CS 510) 2 de mayo, 1540	8	12			Ninguno	20
La Merced (Nao) (10 CS 513) 8 de mayo, 1540	11	6	X	Ninguno	17	
Tres Hermanos (10 CS 509) 31 de mayo, 1540	9	5	X	Ninguno	14	
Todos Santos (10 CS 498) 29 de junio, 1540	7	20	X	Ninguno	27	
San Miguel (10 CS 20) 16 de octubre, 1540	9	5	X	Ninguno	14	
Santiago (10 CS 507) 26 de octubre, 1540	12	11	X		Ninguno	23
1541						
San Nicolás (10 CS 478) 6 de marzo, 1541	16	22	X	X	Ninguno	38
San Lázaro (10 CS 482) 20 de abril, 1541	18	18	X	X	Vacas de Cristóbal de Burgos	36
San Juan (10 CS 476) 13 de julio, 1541	20	26		X	Ninguno	21
San Juan (10 CS 473) 13 de julio, 1541	20	26		X	Ninguno	46
Santa Lucía (10 CS 480) 30 de septiembre, 1541	19	9	X	X	Ninguno	28
Buena Ventura (10 CS 484) 21 de octubre, 1541	5	6	X	X	Ninguno	11
San Alfonso (10 CS 500) 20 de octubre, 1541	27	38	X	X	Ninguno	65
Fragata de Pedro de los Ríos (10 CS 518) 3 de noviembre, 1541	3	4	X	X	Ninguno	7
San Jorge (10 CS 489) 4 de noviembre, 1541	17	7		X	Ninguno	24
1542						
La Concepción (9 CS 35)	21 de enero, 1542	7	4		X	Ninguno
San Jerónimo (10 CS 511) 22 de febrero, 1542	24	35		X	Ninguno	59
Los Tres Hermanos (10 CS 493) 25 de marzo, 1542	12	10	X	X	Ninguno	22
San Nicolás (10 CS 488) 5 de junio, 1542	11	3		X	Ninguno	14
Los Tres Hermanos (10 CS 494) 9 de junio, 1542	12	10		X	Ninguno	22
Santa María de los Reyes (10 CS 494) 15 de junio, 1542	11	8	X	X	150 fanegas de maíz y 200 aves	19
San Esteban de la Cruz (10 CS 516) 22 de junio, 1542	25	37		X	Ninguno	62
Fragata de Calero (10 CS 513) 5 de julio, 1542	5	7		X	Ninguno	12

Table 6 (continuation): Summary of Passengers and Cargos of Departing Ships, 1539-1543 (Vega, 1954-1957).

Ship	Number of Vecinos	Indians	Document	Dinero	Cargo	Total Personas
San Juan (10 CS 496) 11 de julio, 1542	16	25		X	Ninguno	41
Santiago (10 CS 505) 19 de julio, 1542	29	33	X	X	Ninguno	62
San Alfonso (10 CS 505)	62	31		X	Ninguno	57
Espíritu Santo (10 CS 495) 20 de julio, 1542	6	2		X	Ninguno	8
San Juan (10 CS 503) 10 de agosto, 1542	20	18		X	Ninguno	38
Nuestra Señora de los Reyes (10 CS 8) 11 de octubre, 1542	36	37	X	X	Ninguno	73
San Juan (10 CS 21) 18 de octubre, 1542	31	15		X	Ninguno	46
1543						
Bergantín Santa María de los Reyes (10 CS 491) 30 de enero, 1543	8	5		X	Ninguno	13
Santiago (Nao) (9 CS 39) 30 de marzo, 1543	15	7	X	X	Ninguno	22
San Miguel (10 CS 17) 22 de abril, 1543	5	4			Cierta ropa que vino en una caja	9
Guadalupe (9 CS 33) 2 de mayo, 1543	17	10	X	X	Ninguno	27
San Salvador (10 CS 14) 10 de mayo, 1543	16	10	X	X	Ninguno	26
San Miguel (Realejo) (10 CS 11) 11 de mayo, 1543	4	1		X	Ninguno	5
La Concepción (Relejo) (10 CS 12) 17 de julio, 1543	15	7		X	Ninguno	22
Santiago (Nao) (9 CS 36) 17 de julio, 1543	15	24			Ninguno	39
San Juan (Navío) (9 CS 42) 21 de julio, 1543	20	7			Ninguno	27
Sant Alfonso (10 CS 23) 31 de julio, 1543	35	18			Ninguno	53
Santa María de los Reyes (Realejo) (10 CS 4) 3 de agosto, 1543	27	21	X	X	Ninguno	14
Salida sin Fecha						
La Merced (9 CS 36) mayo 20, ?	9	5		X	Ninguno	14
TOTAL	682	601				1283

to build ships. If one considers this fact, one then has to determine how many ships of what size would be needed to export slaves from El Realejo. If one uses the figure of 500,000 slaves exported between 1522 and 1548, for these 26 years it would be necessary to export 19,230 slaves per year. There is one report that Rios exported 2000 slaves illegally, and all of his enemies liberally complained to everyone, including the Crown. To export 19,230 Indians per year it would take 48 galleons working continually throughout the year. To export 19,230 slaves per year using the smaller boats, that had been used to export an average of 13 Indians per voyage, the *vecinos* would need 1479 smaller ships working only in the slave trade during the

26 years, from 1522 to 1548 to export 500,000 Indian slaves. That is the only way the *vecinos* would have been able to export 500,000 slaves between 1522 and 1548. This changes completely the view of massive slave exportation and demonstrates the impossibility of exporting massive numbers of slaves using the small ships few in number available in Nicaragua to 1548. The only way that these numbers of slaves could have been exported south would have been for them to swim towards Panama and Peru.

Finally, some mention should be made of the damage of large scale Indian exportation to the *encomenderos* themselves. It is clear that the only source of wealth for *encomenderos* was for them to obtain as much tribute in its various forms and resell it. The Cerrato *tasación* of 1548 listed many different products that the Indians had to produce in excess of their native production of goods and services for their own use. Cerrato's thorough work produced 198 *encomiendas*, which he split roughly evenly between the Contreras and anti Contreras alliances. He also siphoned off 25 percent of the *encomiendas* for the Crown itself. The average number of tributary Indians, actually families, was about 90 for each *encomendero*. Newson estimated that an *encomendero* needed about 500 tributary Indians to live comfortably. An average of 90 tributary Indians would produce a subsistence income for *encomenderos* but certainly not support a comfortable lifestyle. In light of the low numbers of available tributary Indians, it seems unlikely that the same *encomenderos* would gleefully ship off their own Indians and thereby cut down further on their ability to obtain tribute items for resale to augment their available income.

John Topic, retired archaeologist from Trent University in Canada and a specialist in Peru (personal communication) wrote to us that "I am not aware of large numbers of Nicaraguan slaves arriving after the conquest. There was lots of indigenous labor available in the highlands and some of that was also sent to the coast. The first slaves that I know of were Africans".

He also commented that "...it is well known that Nicaraguans were used as auxiliaries during the conquest. If I remember correctly, these may have arrived with Almagro, or later, but were still involved in some of the early fighting in Peru, and probably also Chile and Ecuador.

Obviously, some of the remaining questions regarding Nicaraguan Indians slaves will be answered in Peru.

Summary

It is respectfully submitted that slave exportation from Nicaragua in the 16th century was not a large scale operation, as based on all available information. The ship *zarpes* and manifests for the period 1539-1542, when large scale exportation has been proposed, totaled 601 Indians, this compiled by a mortal enemy of the slave exporters and who was intent on finding legal violations to end their careers in Nicaragua.

A review of the ships necessary for large scale slave exportation of this period demonstrates that almost certainly there was not available more than a very small fraction of ships that could have been dedicated to slave exportation. And, finally, Nicaraguan *encomienda* holders, who depended on *encomienda* Indians to generate wealth for them, had marginal holdings, and probably would not have engaged in wide spread slave exportation when they only had an average of 90 slave families per *encomienda*. Indian slave exportation does not explain the population's decrease in Nicaragua in the 16th century.

This article has focused on the slave shipments from Nicaragua south to Panama and Peru, and has clearly benefitted from the ethnohistorical interplay between the historical data and the archaeological data. We have been able to present and summarize significant new data and to correct many historical errors made by other scholars. Now, with a more realistic count of the number of ships that were built, the number of trips that were made, and the number of slaves that were most likely shipped, we acknowledge the land sites related to the construction vessels and pre-shipment movement of enslaved Indians. These locations and associated culture material are still largely invisible on the landscape and will require significant additional research, just as was the case with the effort that was made to obtain more reliable statistics.

We have an equally invisible body of data regarding the number of slaves who actually arrived in Panama and Peru and what vestiges of their lives and demise may still be encountered. Lange has hiked the Camino de Cruces which was built from Panama to the Caribbean to transport gold and silver from Peru and Bolivia to a transshipment port from which it was sent to Spain. The musty stench of death is in the air for the entire route and observations suggest that archaeological excavations would be useful.

John Topic also made the observation that a lot of the slaves may have ended up in Panama as porters; as noted above there would have been a huge demand for labor to move shipments across the isthmus. And it does seem that the survival rate was horrendous.

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