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The Drawings of the Cacique de Turmequé: Reclaiming Justice in a Colonial Context

Patricia Zalamea Fajardo

Abstract

The son of a Spanish conquistador with the sister of the chieftain of Turmequé, Diego de Torres (Tunja 1549 – Madrid 1590) is known for his complaints about the corruption of the officials of the Spanish Crown in the Kingdom of New Granada (which corresponds roughly to modern-day Colombia) and their treatment of the indigenous Muisca population, as well as for his claim to the chiefdom of Turmequé. Classified as a *pueblo de indios* according to the Spanish territorial organization of the region, Turmequé depended on the jurisdiction of Tunja, a major artistic center, whose own image as a Spanish city was being constructed in the second half of the sixteenth century. Educated in Tunja, first at the school for mestizos and then at the Dominican convent, Diego de Torres belonged to a particular colonial elite that occupied spaces simultaneously in both the Spanish and Muisca societies but did not entirely belong to either one. Although the documentation regarding his complaints and travels to Spain has been approached both in literary and legal studies, the drawings that he produced alongside his memorial de agravios have not received sufficient attention. In addition to two perspectival maps of the region which have been analyzed by Tom Cummins and Joanne Rappaport as part of the literacy imposed onto indigenous people of the Andes, a full-page drawing of a funerary scene representing Diego de Torres's brother (Pedro de la Torre) on his death bed surrounded by family members and friends stands out for its combination of genres and style. This paper explores the ways in which these drawings functioned as rhetorical strategies that also reflect the struggle of mestizos whose identities were constantly in flux and caught at a crossroads.

Keywords: Latin American colonial art • colonial map • group portrait • Kingdom of New Granada • Turmequé • Diego de Torres • Cacique de Turmequé

The son of a Spanish conquistador, Juan de Torres, and Catalina de Moyachoque, the sister of the Muisca chieftain of Turmequé in the New Kingdom of Granada (now part of modern-day Colombia), Don Diego de la Torre –also known as Diego de Torres or the Cacique de Turmequé—was born in Tunja in 1549 and died in Madrid in 1590.¹ Diego de Torres is renowned for his written complaints (known as the *memorial de agravios*) addressed to King Philip II of Spain in 1578 and 1584, which led him to travel to Spain on two occasions. Motivated by the calling into question of his claim as a rightful chieftain or cacique, but also by the unjust treatment of the indigenous community and the corruption of the local Spanish authorities, Torres produced a significant volume of writings.² Torres has been rightly called a “highly literate and cosmopolitan colonial actor” who wrote and communicated fluidly in Spanish (Rappaport and Cummins 2012, 1; Rappaport 2012, 19-48). Yet, unlike other colonial actors who put forth similar complaints, Diego de Torres stands out, according to Luis Fernando Restrepo, for turning his case into a larger reflection concerning the treatment of indigenous communities (Restrepo 2010, 17). As we shall see, Diego de Torres proves to be a particularly complex and interesting figure, both for his intricate family ties and interstitial placement within the colonial matrix, but also for the rhetorical devices used in his complaints, which include a series of drawings –two maps and a funerary scene with a group portrait—that deserve further consideration.

Further complicated by the fact that his half-brother, Pedro de Torres, was imported from Spain to take over their father’s governance of Tunja in the late 1550’s, Diego de Torres’s family ties, along with his mestizo identity, marked the legal disputes surrounding his legitimacy as chieftain or cacique of Turmequé.³ His convoluted life story has been cast in a romantic light that lives on to this day and which began in literary productions of the seventeenth century that continued well into the nineteenth century.⁴ Modern historians have attempted to redress the image of the Cacique de Turmequé that was constructed throughout the colonial period and into modern times by studying the archival documentation available both in Colombia and Spain. The fullest account of the historical figure of Diego de Torres based on archival material was provided by Ulises Rojas in his comprehensive biography and has been more recently

1 Documents sometimes alternate his name from Don Diego de la Torre to Diego de Torres, the latter of which he is best known to this day. He referred to himself and signed as “Don Diego de la Torre, cacique”. In keeping with previous scholarship, I will refer to him generally as Diego de Torres or Don Diego. A transliteration of a Taíno word, ‘cacique’ was the term used by the Spanish in a generic way to describe any chief of indigenous groups in Colonial Latin America. The word *cacicazgo* refers to the lands governed by the cacique. Caciques, seen as indigenous nobility, were often the intermediaries between the Spanish and the native population. On the development of the figure of the cacique and of *cacicazgos* in the Muisca region (essentially corresponding to the New Kingdom of Granada), see Gamboa, *El cacicazgo muisca en los años posteriores a la Conquista: del psihipqua al cacique colonial, 1537-1575*.

2 The legal cases in which Diego de Torres was involved have left an archival paper trail in both Spain and Colombia. Documentation of the legal cases, as well as Diego de Torres’s letter and formal complaints, are found in the Archivo General de Indias in Sevilla, the Archivo General de la Nación in Bogotá, Colombia, and the Archivo de Simancas, Spain.

3 For a detailed recount of the disputes surrounding his *cacicazgo*, see Corredor Acosta, *Entre el laberinto jurídico de la monarquía hispánica: el caso de un cacique del Nuevo Reino de Granada (1571-1578)*.

4 On the seventeenth-century casting of Diego de Torres in Juan Rodríguez Freile’s well-known chronicle, *El carnero, Conquista y descubrimiento del Nuevo Reino de Granada de las Indias Occidentales del mar Océano y fundación de la ciudad de Santa Fe de Bogotá* (written in 1636-38 but only published in the mid-nineteenth century) and then in the novel by the Cuban writer, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, titled “El cacique de Turmequé: leyenda americana” from 1869, see Restrepo, 26-28. Also see Gamboa, 586, note 15, on more recent literary production from the 1990s.

studied by Joanne Rappaport, Luis Fernando Restrepo, Jorge Augusto Gamboa, and María Paula Corredor Acosta.⁵ While the documentation regarding Diego de Torres's travels to Spain has been approached through a variety of angles, including literary and legal approaches, the drawings that coexisted alongside his texts have been discussed occasionally but overall have not received sufficient attention.⁶



Fig. 1: *The funerary bed of Pedro de la Torre, governor of Tunja.* Ink drawing on paper, 1584. Archivo General de Simancas, MPD, 26,060.

In her study of archival sources for painting in the colonial territory of the New Kingdom of Granada, Laura Vargas brought to light a previously unpublished drawing at the General Archive of Simancas in Spain, showing “The funerary death bed of Pedro de la Torre, governor of Tunja” of ca. 1584, which accompanies a letter by Diego de Torres addressed to Antonio de Eraso, the secretary of the Consejo de Indias, the maximum authority in charge of legislative matters of the Spanish American reigns (Vargas 2012, 81-84). Although the two maps located at the Archivo

General de Indias in Sevilla are better known and have been published on different occasions, this drawing—except for Vargas’s transcription of the accompanying texts—has received little attention in spite of its extraordinary features. Drawn in sepia ink, the image is a large, full-page drawing (44 x 58 cm) that fills its horizontal format to the edges and unusually combines different genres and visual features (fig. 1). The image is at once a group and family portrait of contemporary men, women, and children from sixteenth century Tunja, a representation of a series of specific historical events, and a funerary scene with references to images of piety. In addition to being rather large, its classicizing style, use of space, and relief-like appearance are notable. Although a more in-depth coverage of how these images function within the documents related to Diego de Torres’s cases has yet to be developed, I hope that this first attempt at deciphering this drawing will contribute to the ongoing decolonial approaches and recent studies that have cast light not only on Diego de Torres, but, more generally, on subjects who inhabited similar interstitial spaces, and their own uses of images as rhetorical devices.

5 In addition to the previously mentioned works by Gamboa, Restrepo, Corredor, Rappaport and Cummins, see the major biography by Rojas, *El Cacique de Turmequé y su época*. Also see Hoyos and Rappaport, “El mestizaje en la época colonial: un experimento documental a través de los documentos de Diego de Torres y Alonso de Silva, caciques mestizos del siglo XVI,” 301-318; and Restrepo’s earlier study, “Narrating Colonial Interventions: Don Diego de Torres, Cacique de Turmequé in the New Kingdom of Granada,” 97-117. For an account of the diverse methodological approaches, see Corredor Acosta, 3-4.

6 For one of the most attentive discussions of the maps, see Rappaport and Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered City: Indigenous Literacies in the Andes*.

Mapping local conflicts and the figure of the Cacique de Turmequé

Classified as a *pueblo de indios* according to the Spanish territorial organization of the New Kingdom of Granada, Turmequé depended on the jurisdiction of Tunja, a major political and artistic center of the region, which was being built in the image of a Spanish city during the second half of the sixteenth century (fig. 2 and 3).⁷ Educated initially at a school for mestizos in Tunja and later at the Dominican convent, Diego de Torres received a standard humanist education and was well versed in several subjects, as is reflected in his writings. Torres grew up with his family in the elite circles of Tunja, where, according to Ulises Rojas, his mother taught him the language of their ancestors (Rojas 1965, 8). In the meantime, his half-brother from his father's earlier marriage in Spain, Pedro de la Torre, was brought over from Spain in ca.1557 at the age of 23, in order to take over the *encomienda*⁸ of Tunja as legitimate heir of his father (*ibid.*, 8-9). As a mestizo, Diego de Torres could not inherit his father's rights; however, according to Muisca tradition, which privileged matrilineal succession, as the nephew of the cacique of Turmequé (his mother's brother), he could claim the chieftdom of Turmequé, an issue that was brought up by Diego de Torres in his writings as a matter of natural law (Gamboa 2010, 587).

The first legal case involving Diego de Torres was related to disputes with his half-brother, the *encomendero* Pedro de la Torre, regarding the tributes of Turmequé. In response, Pedro de la Torre brought forth a new lawsuit, on the grounds that Diego de Torres, being a *mestizo*, could not be a cacique (*ibid.*, 586-590). A 1574 sentencing suspended Diego, stating that he should not enter Turmequé, and would be penalized with a fine and exile if he were to do so. This led Diego, together with Don Alonso de Silva, another mestizo facing a sim-

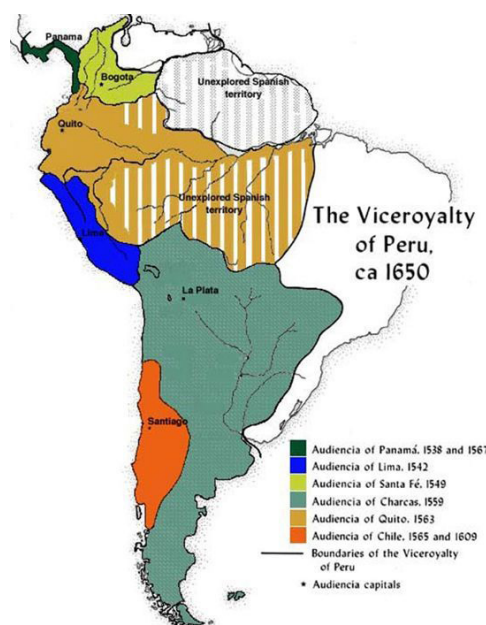


Fig. 2: Political map of the Viceroyalty of Perú, ca. 1650. Tunja and Turmequé are located in what is modern-day Colombia, close to Bogotá, at that time the Audience of Santafé. Source: Daniel Py, Archivo:Mapa del América del Sur resp. del Virreinato del Perú en 1650 approx.png - Wikipedia, la enciclopedia libre (wikicommons), 2008.



Fig. 3: Photograph of Turmequé in the distance. Region of Boyacá, Colombia. Author's photograph, 2018.

⁷ The Spanish territorial organization of indigenous communities into urban spaces (a significant change which shifted the relationship between indigenous communities and their land) were known as *pueblos de indios*, in order to facilitate taxation and evangelization. On *pueblos de indios* in the Andes, see Gutiérrez, *Pueblos de indios. Otro urbanismo en la región andina*.

⁸ The term *encomienda* shares common roots with the term entrusting, referring to the land and to the indigenous population exploited to work it; theoretically, the person in charge of the encomienda (the *encomendero*) had to protect the indigenous population and oversee their Christian evangelization.

ilar issue as Cacique of Tibasosa, to write a first petition to King Philip II (Hoyos and Rappaport 2007, 307). As has been noted by various scholars, being mestizo was the issue at stake: on the one hand, mestizos such as Diego, who aspired to political positions and were well-versed in Spanish, were viewed suspiciously by the authorities as potential threats precisely because of their education in matters of law.⁹ In this particular case, the highest local authority, the Audiencia of Santafé, invoked the lack of legal precedents of having mestizos as caciques in Peru and New Spain, and referred to laws that stated that mestizos could not enter the *pueblos de indios*, although this was not respected in practice (Corredor 2017, 10).¹⁰

This led Diego to travel to Spain in 1575, where he eventually arrived in 1577 after spending two years in the Caribbean. King Philip II finally determined that a *visitador* or royal inspector should be sent to the New Kingdom of Granada, and in 1579, Diego undertook his trip back together with Juan Bautista Monzón, the *visitador* charged with the inspection.¹¹ This led to yet further disputes with the *oidores* (judges) of the Audience of Santafé, who accused Diego of treason and of leading a revolt of *indios* and *mestizos*, all of which led Diego to hide in the mountains around Turmequé and then to travel again to Spain in 1583. Don Diego was ultimately absolved of the charges, although he was not able to recover his *cacicazgo*, and ended up staying in Spain where he married a Spanish woman, had children, and worked in the royal stables (Gamboa 2010, 592-593).¹² During this second dispute with the Audience of Santafé, Diego was apparently reconciled with his half-brother Pedro who was then incarcerated by the Audience and died while in prison, the subject of one of the drawings analyzed in this article, as we shall see.

As it has been noted by scholars, Don Diego stood in an interstitial position and “moved between identities” depending on the context (Rappaport 2012, 27).¹³ Strategically presenting himself as a “Christian cacique,” Don Diego emphasized his noble lineage on both sides (Restrepo 2010, 19, 21).¹⁴ Yet, the Spanish authorities in the New Kingdom of Granada denied him his *cacicazgo* based on the notion that he was a mestizo. Various scholars have remarked on how he addressed indigenous audiences in Spanish.¹⁵ For Restrepo, this was Diego’s per-

9 For an in-depth discussion on the ambiguous conception of mestizaje and the multi-layered reasons for which the right to the *cacicazgo* was called into question (in the specific case of Don Diego de Torres and Don Alonso de Xilva), see Rappaport, “Buena sangre,” 26-28. See also Rappaport, “¿Quién es mestizo? Descifrando la mezcla racial en el Nuevo Reino de Granada, siglos XVI y XVII,” 43-60.

10 Also see Galvez Piñal, *La visita de Monzón y Prieto de Orellana al Nuevo Reino de Granada*, 16, citing documents in the Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla), Santa Fe.

11 Monzón’s visit is the subject of Esperanza Galvez Piñal’s book.

12 In 1590, the Consejo de Indias (to which the Audience of Santafé had remitted the case in 1576) finally served out a sentence, in which it was finally decided not to reconstitute the *cacicazgo* to Diego de Torres.

13 Rappaport and Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered City: Indigenous Literacies in the Andes*, 33-34, apply the concept of “double consciousness” to Diego’s identity, inspired by W. E. B. Du Bois’s studies on identities that are double and therefore neither entirely here nor there. See, in particular, 39-44. Also see 32-33, on Don Diego’s emphasis on his Spanishness.

14 See Corredor, 17, on Diego’s continued use of the term “cacique”. Although Don Diego’s seemingly self-exclusion of the indigenous groups, referring to them as “pobres indios” seems ambivalent, it may be part of a rhetorical strategy that was used to invoke the need for the King’s protection of the indigenous population precisely due to their lack of knowledge in areas such as legal defense. On this ambivalence, see Restrepo, 22; on the rhetorical aspects, see Corredor, 19.

15 On the implications and complexities behind Diego de Torres’s use of language in his public performances, see Rappaport and Cummins, 40-21; in their view, the Spanish authorities “consistently attempted to deny him his bilingualism, in this way reinforcing his mestizo identity.”

formative way of satisfying the Spanish authorities by “presenting himself as a ‘good indio’ towards the Spaniards, and the use of the translator could be a nod to the indigenous audience so that they could understand the public reprehension in an ironic manner” (*ibid.*, 20).¹⁶ For his indigenous audience, this would nonetheless confirm that Diego was part of a colonial elite, so that from this perspective could be seen as a “real Spaniard and good vassal” (*ibid.*, 20). According to Restrepo, Diego’s discourse changed over the years, and he moved towards positioning himself through his native identity while in Spain. During his first trip, having remained in hiding for two weeks in Cartagena after escaping from the Audiencia, Diego contin-

ued to La Habana, with a forceful stop in Santo Domingo, where he witnessed the devastation of the indigenous population first hand and had to wait two years before traveling to Sevilla (where he finally arrived in 1577), an experience that he later recorded in his writings and that has been read by Restrepo as a shift in his political consciousness (*ibid.*, 18, 23).¹⁷ All in all, and despite never recovering his *cacicazgo*, Torres’ claim contributed to the introduction of reforms in the New Kingdom of Granada (Galvez 1974, 141).



Fig. 4: Don Diego de Torres, cacique de Turmequé. Map of the Province of Tunja. 1584. Sepia ink on paper. Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla. Patronato 196, r.16.

Maps as burdens of proof: scale, opacity and perspective

Don Diego de Torres is credited for producing the earliest maps of the region: of the provinces of Tunja and of Santafé (now Bogotá) (fig. 4). Attached to the 1584 *memorial*, the maps are aligned onto a horizontal format, both maps are organized so that East faces upward, as indicated by the (rising) anthropomorphic sun set at the top of each image and by the geographic indication of “los llanos,” that is, the plains behind the mountain range of the Andes, located to the East. Both use a wavy outline to earmark the political jurisdiction of each city: dozens of *pueblos de indios* of various sizes (shown as a simple cross over a rectangular structure with a door, that is, a doctrinal church) are contained within this area, with the Spanish cities of Tunja and Santafé standing out in scale. Geography is signaled by rivers and lagoons, such as that of Guatavita, a matter that should not go unnoticed, since lagoons were sacred indigenous

16 My translation of Restrepo: “El hecho es que don Diego estaba presentándose como un ‘buen indio’ para los españoles, y el uso del traductor podría ser un guiño al auditorio indígena para que recibiera la reprensión pública en forma irónica. Pero este gesto también afirmaba una realidad que sin duda era clara para las comunidades muiscas: don Diego era parte de una élite colonial y su buen manejo del castellano y cercanía a las autoridades coloniales lo validaba como tal. Desde esta perspectiva, se presentaba como un ‘verdadero español y buen vasallo’.”

17 On the other hand, for Rappaport and Cummins, there is an absence of “a discourse of alterity” (32) and they conclude that, through the “idiom of colonial culture,” he was claiming nobility rather than asserting cultural alterity (51).

sites and rivers were fundamental for indigenous agricultural techniques that were based on flooding and developed before the Spanish conquest.¹⁸ Some of the *pueblos de indios* are marked with their names, still recognizable to this day as some of the towns and villages of the rural areas around Bogotá and Tunja (Macheta, Gacheta, Suesca, Suta, and Simacá, in the map corresponding to the surrounding area of Bogotá, but also Sogamoso, Duitama, Paipa, Oicatá and Turmequé in the map of the Province of Tunja, to name only a few).¹⁹

The use of aerial perspective has been commented on by Joanne Rappaport and Tom Cummins, who have described these depictions as “European-style maps” and, overall, as part of the “literacies” imposed onto indigenous people of the Andes (Rappaport and Cummins 2012, 1).²⁰ Such literacies could be, in turn, appropriated by colonial actors such as Diego de Torres, who used them to convey the complexities of his identity and political convictions in a language familiar to his intended readers, that is, the King and his court. If the use of perspective or, more precisely, a bird’s eye view of the region served to convince readers who would have been well-versed in these types of spatial representations, it also shows Diego de Torres’s sophisticated understanding of spatial renderings and his ability to balance, abstract, synthesize and select information, in order to underline his point. Whether he drew the maps or not with his own hand, their inclusion in the package presented to the King shows purposeful intention as well as close knowledge of the geopolitical location of the towns.

As is well known, the function of maps as legal tools in disputes over land was common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²¹ Interestingly, these two maps are not part of a specific, legal dispute over land, but served to visualize a larger grievance at stake: namely the mistreatment of indigenous population and of the land in the Spanish American reigns, not unlike Guaman Poma’s “Mapamundi of the Kingdom of the Indies” in his *Primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (1613-14), whose function was also connected to a larger set of grievances. In any case, Don Diego’s maps would have served as proof, as a type of first-hand witness account, which relied on the ability to combine visual and written languages throughout a

18 See for example the discussions around other painted maps and their representation of the shifts in uses of flooding and swampy lands for agriculture, such as in Juan de Aguilar Rendón’s “Painting of the swampy and flooded lands of Bogotá” (1614, watercolor on paper, Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla), Mapas y planos Panamá, Santa Fe y Quito, 336), in the digital project <https://paisajescoloniales.com/> directed by Santiago Muñoz Arbeláez. Accessed on December 1st, 2022.

19 A few are indicated with numbers, which may correspond to mentions in the writings included in the accompanying texts, as they are not referenced in the maps themselves. Some are also signaled by a pointing hand, a convention used in the maps to annotate; these may thus also refer to further notes within the text. On the exact topography of Don Diego de Torres’s maps, see Bohorquez Diaz, *Digitalización y análisis del plano elaborado por el cacique Turmequé. (Don Diego de Torres y Moyachoque) realizado en el año 1586, de la provincial de Tunja y su historia como posible pionero en la cartografía en Colombia*. Using contemporary cartographic technologies, Bohorquez concludes that the scale of the maps is very precise, and that Torres most likely used instruments such as a cross staff, quadrant, or astrolabe (48-51). Bohorquez is also able to recognize specific towns that exist to this day and that are marked in the maps, even if they go unnamed (41-47).

20 The authors (33) have also noted that systems of European representation prevailed in the Northern Andes, unlike the representations in the prehispanic Inca and Aztec areas, where native forms were more clearly intertwined.

21 On the uses of maps as a way of claiming territory and different visual strategies used in early maps produced of and in the Americas, beginning with Cortés’s map of Tenochtitlan, as well as a summary of the ways in which Guaman Poma’s map has been interpreted, see Cuesta Vélez, “La cartografía y los mapas como documento social en la Colonia.” On maps as legal documents related to territory in a colonial context, also see Leibsohn, “Colony and Cartography: Shifting Signs on Indigenous Maps of New Spain,” 265-281.

spatial representation. Choosing a bird's eye view was also a way of covering a large breadth of information for someone who needed to take the whole picture in, while standing from a distance, that is, just as the King's representatives in Spain. And finally, it also showed that Diego de Torres knew his region extremely well.

For Luis Fernando Restrepo, these representations may be compared to Diego de Torres's reaction to the decimation of the indigenous population in Cuba and Santo Domingo, which Diego witnessed first-hand during his first trip to Spain. In the lower tier of the map of the province of Santafé, we read about the absence of the original inhabitants of the river: "In this river [Magdalena] there was an infinity of Indios, all of which have been consumed in labor, so that of more than 50,000 indios none remain."²² Not only do the short narrative texts make this explicit, but so does the visual organization of space; for Restrepo, the landscape dotted with *pueblos de indios* renders the Spanish cities opaque (Restrepo 2010, 23-24). Despite their size, Santafé and Tunja are overcome not only in numbers, but also in spatial terms by the swarms of smaller towns, which are spread across the image. This strategy turns the map into what we might describe as a pictorial composition, where the scripts and dark spots become essentially a visual experience. In this sense, while speaking the language of its readers, the maps also use visual strategies to make an impression: by inundating the space with the symbolic presence of Christian indigenous citizens, they remind the viewer that these are all subjects of the Crown and should be guaranteed their rights accordingly.

On the other hand, the longer texts on the lower side of the image emphasize the absence and decimation of the indigenous population. Restrepo has interpreted the maps as an "expression of grief" towards colonial violence, arguing that Diego's laments are not so much a melancholic commentary on an indigenous past long gone, as believed by Ulises Rojas, but a strategy already present in his writings: a wish to exert a change in the present, and not simply lament the past (Restrepo 2010, 23). In this light, these maps may be seen as an integral part of Diego's strategies in his *memorial de agravios*, whereby visual rhetoric is meant to complement and impress a particular idea on its viewer. Ultimately, in these maps, the viewer is visually confronted with the relationship between location, relative size, density, and absence or loss. In this way, the bird's eye view renders an overall vision, a wide space, which connects the viewer to an actual specific site, while also reminding us of that which remains invisible, but is known thanks to the textual inscriptions. Working in tandem with the accompanying texts, these maps serve multiple purposes: to place, locate, and visualize in its widest sense, asking the viewer to see and imagine these far-away places with actual names and numbers. Ultimately, their purpose is to impress, by impregnating the image into the mind of the readers.

Tears, chains, and beards: a group portrait and a death scene

In addition to the two perspectival maps of the region, a full-page drawing of a funerary scene, with Pedro de la Torre on his deathbed surrounded by a group of men as well as family mem-

²² Transcribed from Restrepo, 23: "En este río había infinidad de Indios todos los han consumido en las faenas que de más de cincuenta mil indios no han quedado ninguno." (My translation into English.)

bers –women and children—along with a series of narrative texts and identifying inscriptions, is particularly striking for its visual rhetoric (fig. 1). The sepia ink drawing, which accompanied a letter dated May 7th of 1584 and addressed to Antonio de Eraso, secretary of the Consejo de Indias, was aimed at convincing its viewers of an injustice that needed to be remedied.²³ The scene refers to a later moment in the convoluted history of the two half-brothers, one that is less known at large, but that has been well documented in Esperanza Galvez Piñal’s study of the events surrounding Monzón’s royal inspection to the New Kingdom of Granada (Galvez Piñal 1974). In short, the Audience of Santafé disregarded and disobeyed the *visitador*, ultimately accusing him of complicity with Diego de Torres, while fabricating a story about Diego’s supposed incitation of an indigenous rebellion. While Diego went into hiding, the brothers exchanged letters and ended up being on the same side in this dispute or, rather, having the Audience against them. Several acquaintances were placed in jail, along with Pedro de la Torre, who died in 1581 during his imprisonment, while Diego de Torres was still in hiding, a connection that is a central theme of the drawing, as we shall see.



Fig. 5: Detail of *The funerary bed of Pedro de la Torre, governor of Tunja*. Ink drawing on paper, 1584. Archivo General de Simancas, MPD, 26,060.

The image makes specific references to the historical figures involved in these events (all are identified by names or relationship to the deceased), while serving as a complaint. It shows Pedro de la Torre’s limp body surrounded by mourning figures: three men are grouped together on the left side, one of whom appears to be kneeling with the other two figures standing with chains around their feet, while five women identified as family (mother, aunt, sisters) are located on the right. Pedro de la Torre’s six children are also closely arranged on either side of his body; they are identified with their proper names and depicted in a hieratic scale to emphasize their helplessness, a major point of Don Diego’s complaint. Central to the scene is a small window-like perspectival box in the center of the image, albeit placed on a second plane as if hovering in the

background: in it, the chained, seated figure is identified as “cacique don Diego [...] who was retained by the visited in such a way”²⁴ (fig. 5). The text on the right states that because he was being asked to go against the inspector and that seeing that this went against the crown, [Diego] preferred to escape and go into hiding in a cave in the deserts for two years. The text also notes that “injured by the imprisonments to which he was subjected, as will now be seen,

23 For a transcription of the letter to Antonio de Eraso (*Guerra y Marina*, Legajos, 00171, 140, ff.136v-140v), see Vargas, 85-90.

The letter describes Diego de Torres’s current situation, following the death of his brother after having obeyed Monzón, the *visitador* sent by Philip II to the New Reign of Granada; in the letter, he seeks justice for the widow and children of Pedro de la Torre. He also recounts his descendency from his Spanish father and his legitimate inheritance of the cacicazgo (based on the matrilineal line of succession on his mother’s side), while emphasizing his Christian faith, his identity as cacique and as the King’s vassal, albeit from “far away lands” (“soy de lejos tierras”, f.139r).

24 The “visited” refers to those visited by the royal inspector or “*visitador*”. The “visited” are thus the corrupt members of the Audience of Santafé.

his sores are still open, and he suffers an injury.”²⁵ Although the standing figure of the box goes unidentified, one may presume, based on the textual description that this figure was trying to convince Diego to change sides and go against the Crown while still in jail, which ultimately led him to run away. While the text justifies Diego’s actions by placing him, again, on the side of the Crown as his faithful subject, the window plays a major narrative function in reminding the viewer of the events leading up to the unjust death of Pedro de la Torre (which took place in November of 1581). In the documentation relating Diego’s first-hand experience, a special emphasis is placed on the image of chains and on his solitary life as a hermit for two years after escaping prison in February of 1581 (Galvez Piñal 1974, 69-70).

The portrait of the “Cacique don Diego” serves as a visual reminder of the parallel imprisonments, which ultimately led to Pedro’s death. It also emphasizes Diego’s active involvement in the events to this day, still able to place his claims into writing (“as will now be seen, his sores are still open”). By using what is known in visual depictions as a “continuous narrative,” that is, the use of perspective to render simultaneous or separate chronological events in one same pictorial space yet underlining their separateness in time using architectural devices, the drawing reinforces Diego’s identification as both victim, witness, and active claimant.²⁶ While the receding box connects past and present for the viewer to follow and contextualize the story, the larger scene at the front demands that we join in, together with the other figures, as mourners and witnesses to this unjust death.

The main scene is, indeed, one of mourning. All the figures, both women and men, shed copious tears. While women often played this role in mourning scenes, it is less common to see representations of men shedding tears. Crying in public in such scenes was both social and moral, a performative way of paying tribute and connecting the rituals of death to social life, although this was more usually associated with a feminine function.²⁷ Unlike the men who are dressed in contemporary clothes, the women are clad in large, undefined robes with their heads covered, as in ancient reliefs, embracing one another and expressing grief with their body language. One of the women holds a cloth in her hand as a sign of mourning, as does also one of the men (who appears to be kneeling). Overall, the language is that of collective mourning, whose function is meant to elicit compassion in the viewer.

At the same time, the figures seem to be holding a vigil, as indicated by the lit candles at either side of Pedro’s body. Indeed, as noted by Laura Vargas, the disposition of the figures surrounding the dead Pedro de la Torre bears a resemblance to the iconography of the *ars moriendi*, which had been popularized throughout Europe with prints (Vargas 2012, 81). However, unlike the *ars moriendi*, the art of dying (well), this image serves as witness to the violent death of Pedro de la Torre, who did not die well. Although the actual death is not shown here,

25 My translation of the transcription from Vargas, 83: “Este le persuade que sea contra el visitador y que la Real Audiencia le hará mucha merced. Viendo que era contra vuestro real servicio, tuvo por mejor huir como pudo y se metió en una cueva dos años en los desiertos, lisiado de las prisiones que tuvo, como ahora se podrá ver, que aún no tiene cerradas las llagas y padece lesión.”

26 On a continuous narrative, see Andrews, *Story and Space in Renaissance Art. The Rebirth of Continuous Narrative*.

27 On gendered representations of crying in scenes of the Passion of Christ, for example, see Hudson, “Elusive Tears: Lamentation and Impassivity in Fifteenth-Century Passion Iconography,” 31-53.

the complaint refers to it; according to documentation, Pedro died in jail, although according to one of Diego's accounts, he died a violent death, blinded and with his hands amputated.²⁸ In any case, while the scene may indeed remind one of the printed scenes of the *ars moriendi*, the overall tone also recalls lamentation scenes or even of the *pietà*. The image of the clad, kneeling older woman with the full body of a nude man at her feet evokes such imagery. Moreover, the full nudity of Pedro de la Torre is also quite extraordinary, reminding us that his bare body was a site of violence, albeit unseen or at least invisible in this unmarked body. In general terms, the image elicits the idea of piety, and its rhetoric is meant to move its viewer to tears.

Compounded by the fact that we are bearing witness to an unjust death, where women and children have been left without protection, this is a political issue that may only be solved by the King, a matter that is emphasized in Diego's letter to Eraso. The issue is also presented in text on the top left-hand side of the drawing which begins with an address to his royal majesty by "Don Diego de la Torre, cacique in this New Kingdom of Granada," who "says that as manifested by this paper," the life of his brother Pedro de la Torre, because he obeyed and helped Monzón, was taken by those who refused to obey the royal mandates and "stepped on, dragged and slapped" the royal inspector. It is also noted that Pedro's properties were taken from him, leaving his wife with six children, sisters, and nieces without anything to sustain them.²⁹ The text underlines that these are the descendants of the first conquerors who shed their blood to discover the New Reign, while always remaining loyal to his majesty. The second part of the text asks for the King's intervention to review the grievances caused to this widow and orphans, who "await the remedy that your majesty may grant them, for [he, Pedro] died in your service."³⁰ The text on Pedro's body emphasizes again that he died "en vuestro real servicio" ("in your royal service"). Here, the question of justice depends both on Pedro's actions—following the law and the will of the Crown—and on his lineage. Thus, the King's protection is invoked as a rightful and moral duty towards his vassals.

28 On Diego's account of his brother's assassination, after having had his hands cut off and been rendered blind, see Galvez Piñal, 70, note 41. The references to his sight and hands may well be related to the notion of witnessing, which is central in the entire dispute. On Pedro's death while in jail due to health reasons, see Galvez Piñal, 76, note 45.

29 The text on one of Pedro's extended legs reiterates the cruelty of his captors, who did not even allow for him to be given his sacraments. The full text is transcribed by Vargas, 83: "Fue tanta la pasión de los visitados, que viéndole morir en esta prisión no consintieron que se le dieran los sacramentos, siendo regidor y persona principal en aquel reino y que siempre gastó su hacienda en vuestro real servicio y notorio hijodalgo."

30 Transcribed by Vargas, 82-83: "Don Diego de la Torre, cacique en este Nuevo Reino de Granada, dice que de la forma en que en este papel se manifiesta, su hermano Pedro de la Torre, vecino y regidor perpetuo de la ciudad de Tunja, porque obedeció vuestras [reales] cédulas y favoreció al licenciado Monzón, visitador, y procuró el cumplimiento de la real intención de vuestra majestad, los culpados y delincuentes que no quisieron obedecer vuestros reales mandatos y pisaron y arrastraron y abofetearon a vuestro juez visitador por encubrir sus delitos y culpas de muertes de indios, por les robar sus haciendas, y a vuestra majestad usurpándole los quintos y derechos que venían a vuestra hacienda, marcando con el cuño y marca de vuestra Real Caja, en mucho perjuicio y desacato de vuestro patrimonio real y justicia, le acabaron la vida en la cárcel en la forma que vuestra majestad ve, después de haberle consumido toda su hacienda, que era la mejor que había en el dicho Nuevo Reino, y dejó su mujer viuda con seis hijos y hermanas y sobrinas sin un pan ni de qué los sustentar, siendo hijos y nietos de los primeros descubridores y conquistadores que a su costa y misión derramaron su sangre, ganando y descubriendo el dicho Nuevo Reino, y siempre muy leales a vuestra majestad. Atento a lo cual suplico a vuestra majestad que por servicio de Dios y porque en semejantes casos ninguno de vuestros vasallos rehúse aventurar sus vidas y haciendas en vuestro real servicio, como lo hizo el dicho Pedro de la Torre, su hermano, mande vuestra majestad que vuestro Real Consejo de las Indias mire la causa y agravio que a esta viuda y huérfanos se ha hecho, que esperan el remedio que de vuestra majestad les ha de ir, pues murió en vuestro real servicio."

As previously noted, the image combines several genres: a type of lamentation or mourning scene evocative of the *ars moriendi* tradition, but also group portraiture and the documentation of precise historical events. The inclusion of specific portraits is quite extraordinary, as what is usually considered to be the “oldest surviving signed portrait from South America” is that by Andrés Sánchez Gallque of three mulatto leaders from the coast of Ecuador from 1597.³¹ A significant sign of identity are the beards worn by all men except for Pedro de la Torre who is literally nude: even his head appears to be hairless. As discussed by Rappaport, beards are descriptors associated with Spaniards, while the lack of beards served to identify indigenous figures in censuses; on the other hand, mestizos were sometimes identified as having hair on their bodies (“muy vellado”), yet the documents related to Diego’s capture describe him as having little beard (“de pocas barbas”) (Rappaport 2009, 59-60). Yet, the self-representation of Diego de Torres in the drawing shows him as a bearded figure with Spanish dress, on equal terms as the other men who appear in the drawing, seemingly confirming thus his identity as a Christian Cacique. It should also be noted that in addition to being an image of masculinity, beards were known as a sign of mourning in certain contexts, a practice that went back to Classical Antiquity.³² As for the three men to the left of Pedro, these may be identified through their names as specific actors who appear in the documentation of the legal drama that unfolded: (from left to right) Pedro Martínez de Salazar,³³ Diego de Vergara, and Juan Prieto Maldonado,³⁴ all of whom were incarcerated together with Pedro de Torres. The first two are still chained to their feet (echoing those on Don Diego’s legs) while clasping the chains in their hands; in contrast, the chains have fallen off Pedro de Torres’s ankles.³⁵ The specificity in naming these men, while leaving the women and children as a generic group who required assistance, may also be a purposeful strategy, whereby these men, all of whom were of Spanish descent, serve to emphasize how corrupt and unjust the members of the Audiencia were with regards to all citizens, not just towards the indigenous population. To depict this scene with such specificity was also part of the legal argument: on the one hand, it relies on the power of images to visualize and vividly recall something that is not there physically but once was, while serving as the tangible memory of a historical event.

31 For a brief discussion of Sánchez Gallque’s portrait, now at the Museo de América in Madrid, see Rappaport and Cummins, 36-39.

32 On the context of beards as signs of mourning and the implications of Pope Julius II’s growth of a beard between 1510-12, see Partridge and Starn, *A Renaissance Likeness. Art and Culture in Raphael’s Julius II*, 43-46.

33 The name is not clearly readable, leading Vargas to identify him as “Pero Muñoz de Salazar”; however, a close reading of the documentation shows that one of the accused by the Audiencia was Pedro Martínez de Salazar and the marks that appear to spell “ñ” in “Muñoz” may in fact be a shorthand for Martínez. On Pedro Martínez de Salazar, see Galvez Piñal, 76, 80, 88, 113.

34 Imprisoned in 1581, Diego de Vergara was the attorney in Diego’s first trial and had been a lawyer for other mestizos, for which see Galvez Piñal, 51, 76. Juan Prieto Maldonado, a councilor, was imprisoned together with Pedro Martínez de Salazar and Pedro de Torres, and their lands were confiscated (Galvez Piñal, 76). Although not represented in the image, Monzon, the royal inspector (*visitador*), was also imprisoned by the Audiencia (Galvez Piñal, 88-89).

35 The image of Diego de Torres echoes the image of the chains, a topic that he also elaborated in his writings. On Diego de Torres’s account of how he escaped from jail in 1581 and lived as a hermit for two years, while placing special emphasis on the image of his chains, see Galvez Piñal, 69-70.

Conclusions

The drawings accompanying Diego de Torres's claims were meant to elicit a compassionate response in their viewers. Well versed in the languages and legal tools required to make his case, Don Diego turned to images as complementary ways of pressing his complaints. If cartographic description was a way of legitimizing the Spanish conquest and the dominion over territory, but also a legal tool in disputes about land ownership, Diego de Torres's maps may be seen as a decolonial strategy: as a way of reclaiming the rights of indigenous territories by using the same language associated with perspectival map-making and aerial visions of space. By highlighting the *pueblos de indios* over the Spanish cities in pictorial terms, and by emphasizing the misuse of natural resources, issues that were also the subject of his *Memorial de agravios*, Don Diego not only reused European cartographic conventions to produce what is often seen as the first map of the region, but also set a precedent for political map making, that is, maps as protest and a reversal of the traditional legal use of maps in the early Colonial period.

In comparison to the maps, the lines of which are lighter and seem to be more quickly executed, almost like annotations or impressions, the drawing of Pedro de la Torres's death scene is more calculated, composed in the manner of a horizontal painting or relief. Nonetheless, the geographic setting of the maps is very precise. All three drawings use perspective for effectively communicating his points. For example, scale, size and distribution, as we have seen, were important in all instances: while highlighting the political relationship between the Spanish cities and the towns in each province in the maps, they also underlined the need for protection of Pedro's children in the funerary drawing. While Don Diego may not necessarily have executed the drawings, he most likely oversaw them, for the information and strategies are very precise and closely connected to his *Memorial de agravios* in topics and issues.

Finally, it should be noted that Diego made specific references to the function of images, a matter that deserves further consideration. His mention of "the form in which this is manifested in this paper" (in the death scene drawing) may be significant, as are his words in the accompanying letter to Eraso, in which he describes the possibilities of representing his woes in either writing or drawing ("que ni me basta darlo por escrito ni por dibujo").³⁶ Although his annotation of wishing to "have style and that my clumsy tongue knew how to explain it" is a conventional form of false modesty, his annotation of the insufficiency of his tools (both textual and visual) to describe what "happens in those areas" underlines the need to use both writing and visual representation to at least attempt to make his point.

36 Transcribed by Vargas, 89: "Quisiera tener estilo y que mi torpe lengua lo supiera explicar. Que no quisiera yo más premio que su majestad o cualquiera de sus criados me oyese. Quizá ninguno con más amor a su rey dijera lo que hay y pasa en aquellas partes, más Dios me oye, hará lo que pudiere, que ni me basta darlo por escrito ni por dibujo, porque hoy, año de 1584, se podría ver." His emphasis on what could be seen "today" and the date is also a way of emphasizing the possibility of witnessing and seeing.

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