From the Ritz to the rubble? The *asistente* of Seville, urban government and disaster, 1621-1700



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Short abstract

Seventeenth-century Seville, one of early modern Spain's most populous cities and the mercantile hub of its imperial trade, endured repeated and severe flooding of the Guadalquivir River, events that have been largely overlooked by historians. Additionally, Seville's boom-then-bust history and the allure of the 'decline of Spain' thesis have ensured that the second half of the seventeenth century for both the urban and the national context remains similarly neglected. This thesis, by conducting research into the city's flooding from 1621 to 1700 presents an alternative narrative of continuity, at the same time as asserting the value to be gained from a historical study of the environment and disasters. I argue that urban responses – political and cultural – to disaster provide fundamental evidence of the impact of wider historical processes and structures.

The *asistente* – the royal governor – of Seville likewise lacks sustained or detailed study. These men, as the king's appointees, had a vital role in the performance of the government of the Habsburg monarchy. The city's equivalent of the *corregidor* in other Spanish cities and towns, and previously understood as a legal and administrative official, the *asistente*, I argue, responded to a broader set of political attitudes, which prioritised conservation and discouraged novelty. I also stress the hands-on and practical aspects to the post, which demanded a working appreciation of urban space.

By connecting a study of royal government in one of the most significant of early modern Spanish cities to an environmental history of flooding, I address important gaps in the scholarship and suggest new avenues of research into the history of environmental disaster. Spanish 'decline' might be reinterpreted as a failure to deal with specific local environmental issues, and environmental disaster acknowledged as an issue of central political importance.

Long abstract

The reigns of Philip IV (1621-65) and Charles II (1665-1700) encompassed significant changes for both the Spanish monarchy and Seville, and together have been interpreted by traditional historiography as the years of Spain's 'decline'. The historiography of early modern Seville has been decisively shaped by this 'decline' thesis, resulting in a focus on the history of the city in the sixteenth century or the first half of the seventeenth century. This priority has been further encouraged by a pre-occupation with the city's economic boom attributable to New World trade and an emphasis on what has been seen as the epoch-ending plague of 1649 that reduced Seville's population by a half.

By studying the royally appointed governors of Seville, the *asistentes*, during the reigns of the last two Spanish Habsburgs, the essential continuity of urban government, and indeed of Seville's urban culture, in the seventeenth century is made clear. The *asistentes* were the main point of political contact between the court in Madrid and Seville, and they acted as the king's representative in the city, chairing the city council and putting into effect royal decrees with the king's authority. The *asistente* is thus a vital indicator of how crown and city communicated and negotiated the extent and limits of each other's power. Despite their importance, however, no focused study of the *asistente* exists. The role of the *asistentes* (and *corregidores*, who held the equivalent position in Castile's other cities and towns) has usually been interpreted in the light of its legal function and how the official embodied the king's authority in the city. In fact, *asistentes* were engaged in hands-on crisis management, and rather than just being a blunt instrument of power for the monarch, offered the city a means of direct communication and negotiation with the king.

Incidents of flooding in early modern Seville offer rich opportunities to study how the *asistentes* worked in the city, and demonstrate how they were required to engage with the built and natural environment of the city and work in tandem with a range of other officials (with

whom they were in conflict at other times) and reveal popular expectations of the role. Seventeenth-century Seville endured repeated serious flooding in a period of wider European political instability and warfare and national anxiety about the wellbeing of the Habsburg monarchy. The *asistentes* had to lead and organise the municipal response to flooding and act out a patriarchal ideal of rule that was established in contemporary political thought. A burgeoning literature on early modern environmental history and the interdisciplinary field of disaster studies lacks in-depth work on the Spanish context, whilst the only sustained study of flooding in Seville, Francisco de Borja Palomo's 1878 *Historia Crítica de las riadas*, concerns itself more with narrative than analysis.

Environmental history offers an opportunity to consider established arguments and narratives from a new perspective. Geoffrey Parker's recent book *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century* has encouraged fresh consideration of the relationship between the natural world, human decision making and historical processes. Putting Seville's civic response to flood under the microscope tests Parker's concept of a 'fatal synergy' between human and natural factors. The *asistente* had not only to deal with the immediate consequences of environmental disaster on the ground, but also to manage the requirements of the king that might intensify these consequences. Nature could become politicised, and the management of environmental threats was conditioned by religious belief and political thought, as well as Seville's socio-spatial organisation and topography. These factors remained a constant throughout the seventeenth century, a narrative of continuity to set alongside the traditional narrative of decline and collapse.

My thesis moves from a wider perspective of the *asistente* in a national context (encompassing a history of the position, its situation in contemporary political thought, and the bureaucracy at the centre of the monarchy that managed it) to a more focused and urban analysis, following the arrival of the *asistente* in the city, the response to the local demands of urban space, and occasional disasters. Using manuscript and printed material from both Spain's national archive (Archivo Histórico Nacional) and the municipal archive of Seville (Archivo Municipal de

Sevilla), institutional and bureaucratic procedures at the heart of the Habsburg monarchy are set alongside specific events in the city. My methodology involves a qualitative cross reading of urban and courtly official papers (consultas, decrees and minutes) and printed material such as chronicles and contemporary flood accounts.

After a brief overview of key events, the Introduction outlines the historiographical background of seventeenth-century Spain and of Seville. I stress the impact of the environment on early modern urban history and seek to create an impression of Seville as a city of flesh and blood as well as of wood and stone.

Chapter 1 examines the institutional history of the position of *asistente* and how the role was understood in the context of early modern Spanish political thought. A reading of Jerónimo Castillo de Bobadilla's *Política para corregidores*, the definitive conduct manual for urban governors, reveals what were considered the crucial aspects of the role and the assumptions from which the *asistente*'s position was formulated. Bobadilla's text had an important role in legal and political arguments throughout the seventeenth century and shaped the expectations placed on urban governors. I also highlight how the position of *asistente* was differentiated, and introduce some of the men who held the office between 1621 and 1700.

Chapter 2 moves to the management of the position of *asistente* by the monarchies of Philip IV and Charles II. The bureaucracy of the appointment process, revealed in the records of the *Real Cámara*, shows a persistent tendency to prioritise service and loyalty to the crown, regardless of social tensions and political instability elsewhere. Institutionally, the position remained the same throughout the century. Philip IV did, however, twice consider a far-reaching restructuring of the position in 1625 and 1652, encouraged first by the constant jurisdictional conflict in the city between the *asistente* and the *Real Audiencia* (royal court) and then the immediate aftermath of riot in 1652. These proposed reforms would have seen the *asistente* and *regente* (chief judge) of the *Real Audiencia* give way to just one official, a 'viceroy' for Seville. The failure of the proposals demonstrates the essential political continuity of the century,

established by a cultural understanding that 'novelty' was to be regarded with suspicion and 'conservation' to be prioritised.

Chapter 3 moves the focus to Seville itself, detailing some of the duties that the *asistente* had to perform in the city. The *asistente* had a dizzying range of quotidian obligations and responsibilities, reflecting the complexity of the early modern urban environment and the limited bureaucratic machinery on hand to manage it. These were matters of life and death, as the *asistente* both took the lead in supplying the city with food in times of dearth and organised emergency committees to manage the threat of plague. The significance of environmental factors is emphasised, frequently intensifying issues of supply and public health. Royal demands worsened the effects of climate. I also examine the funeral held for an *asistente* who had died in the city for what such events can tell the historian about the perception of royal officials and the conflicting interests in the city.

In Chapter 4, the Guadalquivir River becomes the main focus. The Guadalquivir had been vital for the city's initial growth and sixteenth-century boom, but in the seventeenth century the river presented as many challenges as opportunities for the municipal authorities. I analyse the impact of the Guadalquivir on the spatial and social organisation of the city and how these issues had to be confronted by the *asistente*. The city walls of Seville were built and rebuilt to reflect the changing course of the river; yet in the early modern period extramural districts such as Triana across the river grew. Seville lacked a stone bridge connecting Triana to the city proper, relying on a wooden pontoon bridge, and a failed proposal in 1631 to construct a stone bridge by *asistente* Diego Hurtado de Mendoza reveals the parallel political, economic and technical obstacles that defined the city's early modern relationship with the river. A defensive campaign also had to be fought to maintain and preserve the infrastructure the city already possessed: buildings, drains, fountains, the walls themselves. These challenges endured across the seventeenth century, and the failure for the city to develop its infrastructure can be explained by reluctance on the part of the monarchy to pay for improvements. Urban stagnation was connected to political and military pressures at the national level.

Finally, Chapter 5 ties these strands together by describing and analysing the flooding of the Guadalquivir in Seville throughout the century, with a particular focus on the floods of 1626 and 1684. 1626 was one of most severe and damaging floods in Seville's history, whilst that of 1684 came at the end of a period of sustained environmental hardship, as heavy rains that ended months of drought prompted the river to burst its banks. The aftermath to flooding revealed political and jurisdictional fault lines in the city: in 1626 the *asistente* faced popular criticism over his handling of the crisis, while an argument raged between the city council and Seville's clerical community over the latter's unwillingness to contribute monetarily to repair works needed on the city walls. In 1684 the city had to appeal to the king to suspend payment of regular tax contributions, highlighting a changing dynamic between crown and city across the period. However, in general, policies toward the environment were a constant. There was no real difference in how the city authorities responded to flood in 1626 and in 1684. Emotionally and intellectually, though, the city of the 1680s was more prone to interpreting flood through a lens of crisis, decline and misfortune.

In the conclusion, I connect my case study of flooding in seventeenth-century Seville to recent flooding in the UK. In doing so, I put the problems of early modern urban government in perspective: contemporary governments, with all the additional knowledge, resources, and technology they possess, are often unable to provide effective flood protection for their citizens. Flooding of the Guadalquivir in early modern Seville brought the challenges of early modern urban government into focus. Although a royal agent, the *asistente* entered into local traditions and procedures, worked under their constraints, and frequently took the blame from both city and crown for failures. They also depended on local officials and experts and had to engage actively with the city as a physical space. Although Seville was marked out for its importance by the Habsburg monarchy, events there were reflective of wider developments – hostility to novelty, a fatal synergy of human and natural factors prompting crisis, and a form of government dependent on the cooperation and participation of local elites. In the course of the thesis, the 'decline of Spain' will be revealed as a theory that might be better conceptualised as the failure of the monarchy to recognise the influence of environmental factors on local spaces.

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For my Mum and Dad.

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Abbreviations

AHN – Archivo Histórico Nacional

AMS – Archivo Municipal de Sevilla

BCC – Biblioteca Capitular y Colombina

BL – British Library

BN – Biblioteca Nacional de España

Note on currency

The *maravedí* was the basic, lowest value unit of currency in seventeenth-century Spain. A *real* was comprised of thirty-four *maravedís* and a *ducado* of three hundred and seventy-five *maravedís*. (Following Earl J. Hamilton, *War and Prices in Spain 1651-1800* (Cambridge MA, 1947), p. 38 footnote 7.)

Introduction: Seventeenth-century Seville in decline and crisis?

In 1684 one Francisco de Godoy wrote about eight years of calamities suffered by Andalusia and in particular by the region's capital, Seville, of which he was a *vecino* – a resident. Godoy had been born in Malaga before settling in Seville, although not much else is known about him. A list of disasters, tragedies, and troubles, much of Godoy's text describes the impact of an unpredictable climate, as he narrates both extreme weather and the disasters that followed. The climate was at its most destructive in 1683-4, when prolonged drought in the summer of 1683 was followed by two months of continuous rain in winter, causing violent flooding of the Guadalquivir River that brought 'desolacion' to Seville.[1] Godoy noted the cruel irony of the situation: people had prayed for rain during the drought as 'su unico remedio' for the suffering, but when the rain arrived it brought about 'total ruina de los hombres'.[2] Godoy emphasised the fragility of human experience in the face of an environment that could bring whole cities to the point of starvation and summon surges of water powerful enough to uproot trees and collapse houses. Godoy claimed to be writing about the whole kingdom of Spain, yet the calamities he described were local in scope, culminating in 1684 in the death of the archbishop of Seville, Ambrosio Ignacio Spínola y Gúzman. He therefore connected local tragedy to a national narrative.[3] Godoy's text had begun with a reminder to his readers of the unavoidable mortality of human life – 'Nacimos à morir' – before he developed the argument that the current period of suffering marked 'el ultimo periodo de todas las cosas' during which people would be delivered into the lap of God.[4] He associated disaster with a wider human and political context. For Godoy, as for many other contemporaries, the Catholic faith imbued suffering with a providential purpose, and climate change and natural disasters were tools of divine justice.[5]

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[1] Francisco de Godoy, *Catolica Consolatoria exhortacion a los que en su patria han padecido las calamidades que de ocho años a esta parte se han experimentado*, AMS XI (cuarto).4.15, fo. 248r-253r.
[2] Ibid., fo. 249r.
[3] Ibid., fo. 245v.
[4] Ibid., fo. 246r.
[5] Eschatological thinking was common in the seventeenth-century Hispanic world. See Luís Filipe Silvério Lima, 'Between the New and the Old World: Iberian Prophecies and Imperial Projects in the Colonisation of the Early Modern Spanish and Portuguese Americas', in Andrew Crome (ed.), *Prophecy and*

Alongside such eschatological reactions, there was necessarily a more practical, political response to disasters, as the local government had to respond to both the immediate impact and the subsequent consequences. Natural disasters are in fact anything but natural. A flood becomes a disaster (or a 'calamidad', in Godoy's words) as a result of human factors – political, economic, cultural – rather than 'natural' ones. Seville, one of the wealthiest and most populous cities in early modern Spain, suffered from recurrent flooding throughout the seventeenth century, most seriously in 1626, 1649 and 1683-4. Yet the structures and processes the city possessed to safeguard against flood – both physical and political – were continually demonstrated to be insufficient. This inadequacy demands consideration by the historian, and will be a starting point of this thesis. Such an investigation draws upon political, environmental, and urban perspectives, and connects local narratives to national ones. It argues that politics and the environment are in intricate association, and that the study of early modern government, particularly at the level of the city, should focus more often on the environmental.

In approaching these themes, the issue of relations between centre and periphery is also significant. In February 1684, immediately after the flood Godoy described, Seville's city council wrote to King Charles II pleading for a temporary halt to taxation demands on the city to allow it time to recover from the physical and economic damage sustained. Indeed, the language of the city's letter is similar to that used by Godoy, asking the king: 'se sirva de atender con la clemencia de Padre universal de sus Vasallos a sus continuadas fatigas el alivio'.[6] The natural world and environmental events had a clear impact on the acting out of politics, not only at the periphery, but also at the centre. In the same letter, Seville's city council praised the work of the city's *asistente* at the time, Luis de Salcedo y Arbizu, who toiled tirelessly during the flood.[7] The *asistente* was a royally appointed governor, a non-native of Seville, in office only for a limited period of time, and part of a royal bureaucracy engaged in tax collection and pursuing the crown's wider military and dynastic objectives. Yet these men were obligated to defend the city and

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Eschatology in the Transatlantic World, 1550-1800 (London, 2016), pp. 33-64. For Andalusia more specifically see Katie Harris, *From Muslim to Christian Granada: Inventing a City's Past in Early Modern Spain* (Baltimore, 2007), p. 43.

[6] City council of Seville to Charles II, 29 February 1684, AMS XI (folio).1.46, fo. 244v.

[7] Ibid., fo. 243r-v.

represent its interests – responsibilities that demanded an understanding of the city's physical realities and urban spaces. By approaching the relationship between the environment and urban society in seventeenth-century Seville through the *asistentes*, and in particular their role in respect to the environment and disaster, I hope to suggest new avenues of research into the intersection between environmental, urban, cultural and political history. I will also connect a local, urban history to a national one, by situating the management of disaster within the wider obligations of royal governors to cities.

Beyond issues raised by flooding, Seville is a particularly suitable city for a study which connects local to national narratives. Seventeenth-century *sevillanos* themselves were rarely hesitant to talk up the importance and fame of their city – the historian Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga boasted in his annals of the city of 1677 that there was nowhere in the world where the 'famoso nombre' of Seville didn't reverberate.[8] At the start of the seventeenth century Seville was one of the jewels of the Spanish monarchy – populous, prosperous, the commercial centre of a silver-rich empire. Historians later connected the city's fortunes to those of the monarchy whose splendour it seemed to represent, as a period of power and glory was followed by what was seen as failure and decline. For example, Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, one of the twentieth century's foremost historians of early modern Spain and Seville, and himself a *sevillano*, introduced his survey of Seville in the seventeenth century by observing that 'la historia de Sevilla presenta un paralelismo notable con la historia de España'.[9] In particular, the 'decline of Spain' thesis has been closely linked to Seville, as both city and monarchy experienced what seemed in the eyes of many historians to be crisis and regression. A seductive, evocative, and fatalistic narrative, the decline of Spain often fails to convincingly connect local or urban histories to problems at the centre, and its teleological thrust has provoked scepticism if not outright hostility from historians.[10] Yet decline remains an essential part of Seville's historical identity, the plummeting fortunes of the

[8] Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales eclesiasticos y seculares de la muy noble y muy leal ciudad de Sevilla, metropoli de Andaluzia: Que contiene sus mas principales memorias desde el año 1246 ... hasta 1671* (Madrid, 1677), 'El autor a quien letere estos annales'. For more details on Ortiz de Zúñiga, see below p. 40.
[9] Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla: La Sevilla del siglo XVII* (Seville, 2006), p. 15.
[10] Most notably from Henry Kamen. See below, pp. 9-10.

city seemingly inextricable from those of the Spanish monarchy in the historical imagination.[11] More recently, Geoffrey Parker has incorporated Seville and Andalusia into his elaboration of a 'global crisis of the seventeenth century', in which environmental misfortune and financial mismanagement prompted popular unrest, following what Parker argues was a common pattern across almost the entire globe.[12] Seville has been implicated in historical arguments that range from the national to the global. A more thorough understanding of flooding in the city, at a turning point in its history, will sharpen perspectives on these wider themes.

Within the introduction, I will explore the historical debates over decline and crisis, and establish environmental history as an important perspective that has much more to contribute to early modern Spanish history, both by adding to these debates and by asking new questions. I then describe the political structure of the Spanish monarchy during the reigns of the last two Spanish Habsburgs – Philip IV (1621-65) and Charles II (1665-1700). Indeed, by including the reign of Charles II in my study, I will begin to address a gap in the scholarship which frequently glosses over these years. In the case of Seville itself, the second half of the century has been the subject of hardly any attention at all by historians. Charles II's reign saw a reorientation of the power dynamic between the city and the royal court, apparent in the reaction to flooding, and by including both reigns a more complete appraisal, and an important contribution to the historiography of early modern Spain, can be offered. A more detailed introduction to seventeenth-century Seville, including its political organisation, provides further context for my argument, and I conclude by briefly summarising the evidence I have used. Moving from a macro to a micro perspective during the course of the thesis, I hope to demonstrate the importance of the environment and disasters such as flooding (particularly in respect to understanding the role and performance of urban government), and how historians might, through integrating such issues into their analysis, reconsider both local and national narratives.

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[11] See pp. 28-9.
[12] Certainly Eurasia, at least. Geoffrey Parker, *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, 2013). This work will be discussed in greater detail below, pp. 14-7.

i. Decline and crisis in seventeenth-century Spain?

To situate the events related in this thesis, and indeed the theories of decline and crisis described above, I will first briefly recount the events in the Spanish monarchy, 1621-1700. This period included the reigns of only two kings, Philip IV and Charles II, but these years make for an intense and chaotic narrative. Initially greeted with optimism, the reign of Philip IV ended having endured some of the most profound shocks and crises experienced by any Spanish ruler.[13] The kingdom of Philip IV encompassed the crowns of Castile, Aragon and Portugal within the Iberian Peninsula, an extensive empire in the New World, and contested European possessions in the Netherlands and Italy (including Naples and Sicily). Succeeding his father who had died on 31 March 1621, Philip IV relied for the first twenty years of his rule on the energy and guidance of Gaspar de Guzmán, the count-duke of Olivares (1587-1645). Guzmán attempted a series of political and economic reforms, most significantly the Union of Arms project, conceived in 1625, to raise troop levies from all of the component territories and provinces of the Spanish monarchy for use in the defence of the other territories as the need arose.[14] The first twenty years of the reign were defined by a series of conflicts in Holland and with France, until in 1640 the monarchy endured what Olivares called its most damaging year ever. Catalonia broke into revolt in late April (in reaction to the behaviour of billeted Castilian troops and the aggressive comportment of the Spanish viceroy), before Portugal followed suit – John, Duke of Braganza being declared King John of Portugal on 1 December. In both territories, the French monarchy provided assistance to the rebels – armed intervention and money respectively. Shortly after this crisis, Olivares was ousted from Madrid: he was exiled in January 1643, and died in 1645. His unofficial successor as *valido* was Luis de Haro (1598-1661), who (despite Philip IV's claims that he would

[13] For the brief narrative of Philip's reign that follows, I have used the classic account of J.H. Elliott in his *Imperial Spain 1469-1716* (London, 2002), Chapters 9 and 10.
[14] Olivares, along with Cardinal Richelieu in France, was the archetypal *valido*, or minister-favourite. Such positions had special influence and power in the seventeenth century. See J.H. Elliott and L.W.B. Brockliss (eds.), *The World of the Favourite* (New Haven, 1999).

govern without a favourite) was at the centre of the monarchy until his death in 1661. During his time in office, Spain recognised and made peace with the Dutch Republic in 1648.

Further revolts in Sicily and Naples, and continuing efforts to recover Catalonia (Barcelona was recaptured in 1652), ensured that in subsequent years the monarchy placed unsustainable financial demands on Castile (including Seville) in particular. New impositions on salt and stamped paper (introduced by Olivares) and periodic currency revaluations did little to strengthen the crown's economic position (the latter in fact doing much to damage it). Philip IV's reign was defined by continuous warfare and fiscal exertion, but these efforts were too diffuse, lacking specific objectives other than the *conservación* of the monarchy.[15] Portugal, despite an expensive military campaign, would never be recovered. By the time Spain acknowledged the sovereignty of the Braganzas in 1668, there was a new Spanish king.

Charles II began his reign as a minor of only four years, the first succession of a child in the history of the Spanish monarchy. From Philip IV's death in 1665 until 1675 Spain was governed by a *junta de gobierno* (a *junta* was a specially convened and mandated political council), with the executive authority provided by the queen regent, Mariana of Austria.[16] As war continued to haemorrhage money and men, the first half-decade of the reign witnessed a struggle for power between the queen's confessor Juan Everado Nithard (1607-81), an Austrian Jesuit who had the confidence of the queen regent and took a leading role in the new government, and Philip IV's charismatic bastard, Don Juan José (1629-79). Their disagreements and personal enmity provoked Don Juan to flee to Catalonia after a supposed assassination attempt, and he launched a military coup to oust Nithard in 1669 following a polemical war of letters.[17] Don Juan then accepted a post as vicar general of the Crown of Aragon, returning to the periphery, but he was to

[15] Numerous historians have demonstrated the significance of the idea of *conservación*, especially in the first half of the seventeenth century. See J.H. Elliott, 'Self-perception and Decline in early seventeenth-century Spain', in his *Spain and its World: 1500-1700: Selected Essays* (London, 1989), p. 250, and José Antonio Maravall, *Poder, honor y élites en el siglo XVII* (Madrid, 1979), p. 6. The importance of a sense of *conservación* in encouraging hostility to political change and 'novelty' is discussed below in Chapter 2, pp. 94-7.

[16] Henry Kamen, *Spain in the Later Seventeenth Century, 1665-1700* (London, 1980), pp. 328-9. Kamen's work remains the most comprehensive English-language general study of Spain under Charles II. Chapters 13-15, pp. 328-94, provide a detailed narrative of the reign.

[17] For the 'war of letters' between Nithard and Don Juan, see Héloïse Hermant, *Guerres de plumes. Publicité et culture politique dans l'Espagne de la fin du XVIIe siècle* (Madrid, 2012).

remain influential. Although Charles II attained his majority in 1675 the queen regent was still the dominant political figure due to Charles's infirmity, the consequence of Habsburg intermarriage and ensuing genetic degradation.[18] A courtier named Fernando Valenzuela (1630-92) had by now gained her confidence, but he aroused the hostility of the aristocracy by claiming too many exclusive rights of access and ceremonial precedence to the persons of the royal family. When the grandees moved against Valenzuela, and Charles II banished him from Madrid to the Escorial, the king summoned Don Juan, and he arrived at the head of an armed force in January 1677 to form a government of ministers to rule with the king. However, Don Juan's period in office was to last only two and a half years, before he died following a fever in July 1679, and his government was a failure, as he lacked both the time and the royal confidence needed to prompt change.[19] Government then passed to a succession of senior ministers: the duke of Medinaceli until 1684, then the count of Oropesa until 1691. Mariana of Neuburg, Charles's second queen (his first, Marie Louise of Orleans, had died in 1689), orchestrated Oropesa's removal and assumed effective control of the court during the 1690s. As it became clear that Charles II would never produce an heir and a contested succession appeared inevitable, the decade was defined by political manoeuvring ahead of the anticipated conflict. Following Charles's death on 1 November 1700, the line of Spanish Habsburgs was ended.

The standard view of the reign of Charles II is best evoked by quoting Elliott, describing how the 'last pallid relic of a fading dynasty was left to preside over the inert corpse of a shattered Monarchy'.[20] Overextension and mismanagement under Philip IV were impossible to reverse; Charles II and his government were simply treading water. As we shall see below, this interpretation does not tell the full story. But the above narrative – a litany of military defeats, territorial shrinkage, political infighting and dynastic failure – has been transmuted by historians into a conceptual framework of collapse and, crucially, decline.

[18] See Jaime Cerda L., 'Carlos II de España, "El hechizado"', *Revista médica de Chile*, 136:2 (2008), pp. 267-70.
[19] Kamen, *Spain in the Later Seventeenth Century*, pp. 329-45.
[20] Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, p. 360.

The decline of empires has a seductive appeal as a historical trope, reflecting a supposed truism that what goes up must come down, all empires that rise must fall. Decline provides a readily understandable historical framework, and until recently it was the default basis for understanding seventeenth-century Spain. Writing in 1957, Trevor Davies introduced his work *Spain in Decline 1621-1700* by describing Spain as undergoing 'an almost continuous process of decline' that progressed through the seventeenth century 'with unslackening intensity'.[21] Decline here is all-embracing, encompassing the political, the economic, the social, and the cultural. It gathers pace, proceeding as a steep, straight downward line on a graph, taking Spain ever further into the abyss. Such generalised descriptions have been encouraged by the comments of foreign observers of Spain in the later seventeenth century, nearly all of whom were unremittingly negative about the Spanish monarchy and its prospects. One anonymous English observer wrote in 1677 that the condition of Spain was 'so unsettled and so miserable, their Counsills so irresolute, their Counsellors of State such stupendious [sic] weak men, so horribly ignorant and so damnably obstinate and proud that you cannot believe it... It is to me the greatest wonder I ever saw that there *is* a Spanish monarchy'.[22] J. N. Hillgarth has pointed out that many of these observers were basing their comments on what they had seen in Madrid and the court, and were consequently ignorant of the 'vigour' in local economies elsewhere in Spain.[23] Those non-Spaniards that did make it to Seville, however, found no problem in incorporating the city into their pre-existing impression of the kingdom, and it came to serve as a symbol of Spain's decline. The marquis of Villars, a French diplomat visiting Seville in the early 1680s, wrote: 'It is credible that if this town – fifty years ago one of the richest in the world and so well endowed – is in a state of such deep depression, the rest of Spain is scarcely in a better condition'.[24]

Contemporary domestic diagnoses were often equally fatalistic. The first decades of the seventeenth century were characterised by the writings of the Spanish *arbitristas*, intellectuals who published a veritable avalanche of treatises recommending different programmes for change

[21] Trevor Davies, *Spain in Decline 1621-1700* (London, 1957), p. 1.
[22] Quoted in J.N. Hillgarth, *The Mirror of Spain, 1500-1700: The Formation of a Myth* (Ann Arbor, 2000), pp. 514-5.
[23] Hillgarth, *The Mirror of Spain*, p. 515.
[24] Quoted in Davies, *Spain in Decline*, p. 158.

to a stricken Spanish monarchy.[25] R.A. Stradling claims that from the reign of Charles II 'Spanish society was entering a kind of dark age'.[26] Quantitative evidence of a downward spiral was provided in the Chaunus' monumental work tracking the number and contents of the silver fleets coming into Seville up until 1660 – showing a steady dropping off in the value of arriving riches, suggesting that the damage was done before the last Spanish Habsburg inherited the crown.[27] Decline has therefore been argued from qualitative and quantitative evidence. Yet, as is apparent from even a brief overview of the traditional literature, the decline thesis suggests and implies conclusions that it cannot maintain in practice, both regarding the mentality and quality of life of Spaniards themselves, and the territorial coverage of where this 'decline' supposedly impacted.

Indeed, in revising the idea of 'Spain in decline', historians have attacked the narrative on points of chronology (when exactly did Spain decline?), methodology (was decline economic, political, or something else?), and terminology (what exactly did decline mean and entail?). Henry Kamen's criticisms have been the most caustic. In his article 'The Decline of Spain: A Historical Myth?' Kamen attacks the decline thesis on all fronts, and his answer to his own question is a resounding 'yes'. Not only did decline fall on different parts of Spain at different times and in different ways, but 'decline' itself is a mislabelling of the process: in Kamen's view, Spain never 'rose', but instead enjoyed only a brief and illusory pre-eminence as a result of its economic dependence on unreliable imperial possessions. He also attacks what he sees as the sloppy methodology of those who argue for decline, arguing that wholly unrelated phenomena – plague mortality, military defeat, trade depression – have been jumbled together in a fatalistic way and presented as evidence of a single organic disease, when in fact it is vital to distinguish between natural phenomena such as epidemics and structural phenomena such as economic

[25] J.H. Elliott, 'Self-perception and Decline', pp. 243-6. Suggested programmes ranged from suggesting monetary reforms and racial cleansing to education reform. The figure of the *arbitrista* became mocked in the literature of the time. See Jean Vilar, *Literatura y Economía. La figura satírica del arbitrista en el Siglo de Oro* (Madrid, 1973).
[26] R.A. Stradling, 'Seventeenth Century Spain: Decline or Survival?', *European History Quarterly*, 9:2 (1979), p. 183.
[27] Huguette Chaunu and Pierre Chaunu, *Séville et l'Atlantique, 1504-1650* (Paris, 1955-59), 8 vols.

backwardness.[28] Many of Kamen's attacks on the decline thesis are overly semantic and he expends too much energy in attempting to disprove an essentialist argument that few scholars subscribe to. But the thrust of his rebuttal reflects the current tenor of historical scholarship, which emphasises the plurality and diversity of historical experience within Spain itself, and downplays attempts at making generalisations.

Most recent scholarship has indeed tended to move away from the assumptions of the decline thesis. Economically, decline up to 1700 has been shown to be illusory, as in the geographical peripheries and within specific markets there were signs of growth, and currency measures taken by the crown that may have been damaging in the short-term would encourage recovery in the long-term.[29] Recent economic histories in particular call into question how far symptoms or causes of decline at the national level impacted on the local.[30] Similar observations have been made regarding Habsburg government; it is now generally accepted that political uncertainty at the centre did not automatically translate into loss of control or political weakness in the kingdom's more peripheral regions.[31] Regarding the wider national and imperial political situation, Christopher Storrs has recently reinterpreted the reign of Charles II as a time of 'resilience', and 'conservative' achievement, the modest reforms of politicians such as Oropesa pre-empting and paving the way for what have traditionally been interpreted as the accomplishments of the Spanish Bourbons.[32] The economic and political grounding of decline then has suffered from heavy criticism, and decline has become a term to be avoided, if not

[28] Henry Kamen, 'The Decline of Spain: A Historical Myth?', *Past and Present*, 81 (1978), pp. 25, 41 and 48.
[29] Bartolomé Yun Casalilla, 'Del centro a la periferia: la economía española bajo Carlos II', *Studia Historica: Historia Moderna*, 20 (1999), pp. 45-75, provides a good introduction to regional studies that have called economic decline into question. Regina Grafe's *Distant Tyranny: Markets, Power, and Backwardness in Spain, 1650-1800* (Princeton, 2012) argues that early modern Spanish economic 'backwardness' is overstated.
[30] The silver trade with America, for example, had limited impact on the manufacturing or agricultural output of lower Andalusia as a whole. A. García-Baquero González, 'Andalusia and the crisis of the Indies trade, 1610-1720', in I.A.A. Thompson and Bartolomé Yun Casalilla (eds.), *The Castilian Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 132-5.
[31] See Luis Antonio Ribot García, 'Conflicto y lealtad en la Monarquía Hispánica durante el siglo XVII', in Francisco José Aranda Pérez (ed.), *La Declinación de la Monarquía Hispánica en el siglo XVII: Actas de la VIIa Reunión Científica de la Fundación Española de la Historia Moderna* (Cuenca, 2004), p. 61. This volume, with its reference to 'decline' in the title, is reflective of the wider historiography; the vast majority of its essays focus on specific regional or local contexts and rarely address the issue of 'decline' directly.
[32] Christopher Storrs, *The Resilience of the Spanish Monarchy, 1665-1700* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 6, 13 and 189.

rejected outright. In one respect, however, there is still some disagreement over decline, and particularly over the extent to which there was a 'self-perception' of decline in Spain itself, to use Elliott's phrase. In arguing over the relative and absolute aspects of decline in political and economic terms, historians have arguably downplayed the human experience of historical events.

In his article 'Self-perception and Decline', Elliott stresses the need to study the 'constant interplay between action and perception', and how the perception or sensation of 'decline' by Spanish statesmen might or might not have had a tangible, real-world impact.[33] Through such an emphasis Elliott recognises the emotional responses of individuals – that decline was something that was felt, rather than an abstraction reducible to numbers on a spreadsheet or borders on a map. Elliott focused his attention on the *arbitristas* of the early seventeenth century, who mainly wrote in the reform-ready context of the first years of Philip IV's reign. Recent work is divided on whether the *arbitristas* ever directly used the word 'decline'. For example, a study of a treatise that explored the 'state of the monarchy' in 1661-2 has demonstrated that in the author's proposals for cures to the monarchy's 'achaques', there is no sense that the Spanish crown was seen as being in an inevitable process of decline. The treatise indeed suggests practical political measures and economic policies to make right Spain's reverses.[34] Thirty years later, towards the end of the reign of Charles II, in a sermon given by a royal chaplain and addressed to the king himself in the royal chapel, the kingdom was again conceptualised as a human body, one which had become 'moribunda' and 'enferma'. Yet even at this late juncture there was still the possibility for improvement, provided there was reform in moral behaviour, a return to the idealised moral past of the 'Catholic Monarchs' Ferdinand and Isabella (1469-1516).[35]

Contemporary Spaniards felt that their kingdom was under threat, frequently framing the challenges faced by the monarchy as 'sicknesses'. Yet they identified potential cures for the ills, in the form of political as well as moral recommendations. Decline was perceived, and painfully felt by some, but did not necessarily swamp those facing the challenges with fatalism or self-

[33] Elliott, 'Self-perception and Decline', pp. 241-2.
[34] Cristina Hermosa Espeso, *Una mirada a la Monarquía española de finales del reinado de Felipe IV* (Valladolid, 2010), pp. 18-9.
[35] Fernando Negredo del Cerro, 'Las atalayas del mundo. Los púlpitos y la explicación eclesiástica de la decedencia de la monarquía', in Aranda Pérez (ed.), *La Declinación de la Monarquía Hispánica*, pp. 863-6.

doubt. Decline is an important theme for this thesis. Disasters such as flooding within a specific political and urban context offer an ideal case study in which to see the 'self-perception of decline' in action. Environmental shocks had political and practical as well as moral and theological implications. Comparing and contrasting flooding in Seville across the seventeenth century reveals the many continuities of urban life in early modern Spain, whilst a focus on the position of the *asistente* will demonstrate that turmoil at the political centre could have a tangible impact on the quality and nature of royal leadership in the city. The words of Francisco de Godoy in the 1680s show that there was an increasing sense of loss in seventeenth-century Seville, a sense of what historians have termed 'decline', but that the reality on the ground was more complex and multi-faceted than the term 'decline' has traditionally implied. Through focusing on Seville's environment, I hope to encourage fresh perspectives without discarding the terminology of decline that, whilst imperfect, still expresses a historical mood. By adding detail to a local context with a new set of research questions about the practicalities of urban government while not losing sight of a wider national context, I hope to refine what might be useful in the idea of decline but also disentangle Seville from automatic assumptions.

Environmental and climatic events played a major role in Seville's seventeenth century, but more generally, the environment impacted on every area of early modern society. The seasons determined when states went to war, yearly temperatures determined the success of harvests, storms could prevent travel by sea and bring flooding on land, and the environment provoked profound intellectual and emotional responses. A historical appreciation of the environment can take a number of forms. Most directly, historical climatology (a growing field) seeks to reconstruct past weather conditions and assess the nature and extent of the impact on human society.[36] Although some historians, for example Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, have cautioned against the dangers in making too large claims for the impact of climate, it is impossible to ignore

[36] Christian Pfister, 'Balacing between Reconstructing Past Climate and Human Dimensions of Destructive Weather. The Crux and Challenge of Historical Climatology', in Martin Knoll and Reinhold Reith (eds.), *An Environmental History of the Early Modern Period: Experiments and Perspectives* (Berlin, 2014), pp. 5-6.

the impact of the natural world on early modern society.[37] I do not attempt in this thesis to reconstruct Seville's climate for the years 1621-1700; rather I want to demonstrate how human and natural processes had profound resonances on each other, and to explore what one particular environmental issue – flooding – can tell us about the city in these years, its relationship to the monarchy that governed it, and how this topic can shed light on wider historical debates. An appreciation for urban history alongside environmental history is also valuable. Notable past formulations on the essence of environmental history, for example that of Donald Worster ('environmental history is about the role and place of nature in human life', with nature understood as the nonhuman world), seem to exclude a role for the urban, despite the extent and significance of the political, social and physical processes that occur in cities.[38] Environmental and urban historians have also both tended to work in a more 'modern' period, starting from the late nineteenth century, and have thus reinforced a widespread impression of early modern cities as unchanging and inert places. Instead, as argued by Georg Stöger, 'combining both urban and environmental historical approaches can help us gain a more differentiated view upon urban life in pre-modern cities'.[39] In this thesis I hope to combine the environmental, the urban and the political, and contribute to advances in historical scholarship and to the wider awareness of these crucial issues. In a time of global climate change, cities are the most vulnerable sites of human habitation, but can also lead the way in developing new structures and ways of government to combat the effects of this climate change.[40]

Such concerns are at the heart of a recent work in which an environmental focus gives new life to another much-debated interpretation of seventeenth-century history, one that again directly implicates Seville. The 'general crisis of the seventeenth century', first posited from an

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[37] Emmanuel le Roy Ladurie, *Times of Feast, Times of Famine: a History of Climate since the year 1000* (London, 1972), pp. 7 and 15.
[38] Donald Worster, 'Appendix: Doing Environmental History', in Donald Worster (ed.), *The Ends of the Earth: Perspectives on Modern Environmental History* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 292.
[39] Georg Stöger, 'Environmental Perspectives on Pre-Modern European Cities – Difficulties and Possibilities', in Knoll and Reith (eds.), *An Environmental History of the Early Modern World*, pp. 15 and 52.
[40] Nicholas Stern and Dimitri Zenghelis, *The Guardian*, article 'Climate change and cities: a prime source of problems, yet key to a solution', accessed 11 January 2017, at http://www.theguardian.com/cities/nov/17/cities-climate-change-problems-solution.

economic basis by Eric Hobsbawm and then reinterpreted as social conflict by Hugh Trevor-Roper, highlights the coincidence in the 1640s of popular unrest, insurrection, warfare, and economic uncertainty across Europe. The result was, according to Trevor-Roper, a set of fundamental changes in European society.[41] He argued that in making the leap from the first to second half of the seventeenth century,

> Intellectually, politically, morally, we are in a new age, a new climate. It is as if a series of rainstorms had ended in one final thunderstorm which has cleared the air and changed, permanently, the temperature of Europe.[42]

The responses to crisis varied from kingdom to kingdom, but the preconditions for crisis – war, outrageous court expenditure, and taxation – made the crisis a Europe-wide reaction. Spain's population certainly fell victim to many of these ills. However, for Trevor-Roper Spain was exceptional, in that after this 'crisis of the relation of the state to society' Spain's pre-existing monarchy survived more or less unchanged, 'a disastrous, immobile burden on an impoverished country'.[43] 'General crisis' was thus easily incorporated into the pre-existing decline framework for Spanish history – Spain failed to reconfigure post-crisis, held back by despotic absolutism and debilitating superstition. Just as with decline, however, scholars attacked and undermined the assertions of the 'general crisis' theory. A volume of essays under the title *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century*, published initially in 1978 and then reprinted in a second edition in 1997, reflect a consensus that if the idea of the 'general crisis' has any merit at all, then it should at least be used with extreme caution. Ivo Schöffer most forcefully moved the seventeenth century away from crisis by arguing that it was 'a period of solidifying and organizing'.[44] Again, the diversity and multiplicity of historical perspectives seemed to caution against a sweeping, generalising narrative.

Geoffrey Parker, however, one of the editors of that volume, clearly remained convinced there was more to the idea of a 'general crisis' than intellectual gymnastics, and in reattempting the approach he looked at events on a global scale. The unifying factor justifying his perspective,

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[41] Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The General Crisis of the 17th Century', *Past and Present*, 16 (1959), p. 38.
[42] Ibid., pp. 33-4.
[43] Ibid., p. 61.
[44] Ivo Schöffer, 'Did Holland's Golden Age Coincide with a Period of Crisis', in Geoffrey Parker and Lesley M. Smith (eds.), *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century* (2nd edition, London, 1997), p. 104.

he argued, was the incorporation of environmental history. Consistently low global temperatures, high rainfall levels, an increasing number of natural disasters, and more instances of drought all occurred during the seventeenth century.[45] In his recently published *Global Crisis: War, Climate Change and Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century*, Parker rallies evidence from across continents to support the idea of a 'Little Ice Age', and argued that even if scientists could not agree on how the various natural phenomena were interrelated, they had a real and harmful impact on human society.[46] With most of the globe depending on a single 'staple' crop, a global reduction in temperatures induced famine, and although different areas were affected to different degrees, Parker emphasises a global 'urban graveyard' effect, with death-rates in cities far outpacing birth-rates, so that urban populations were only sustained by migration from the countryside.[47] Compounding the 'natural' threats were human ones. Parker emphasises that the seventeenth century was perhaps the most war-filled in history, with a notable tendency toward civil wars; 'War, rather than peace, had become the normal state of human society'.[48] War and ensuing taxation helped provoke a 'fatal synergy' between human and natural events, Parker argues, distinguishing the seventeenth century as one of crisis.[49] He is at his most compelling when highlighting the human consequences of environmental turmoil, for example the note left with a baby at a Madrid orphanage, written by distraught parents in the first person: 'My name is Ana … I beg you to entrust me to someone who will look after me'.[50]

Indeed, Spain is emphasised as one of the main victims of the global crisis. Droughts in the early 1630s, spring 1641 and 1680s, widespread flooding in the 1620s, extreme winters in the

[45] Parker, *Global Crisis*, pp. 16-7.
[46] The Little Ice Age, a period of cooler temperatures and glacial expansion from the sixteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, did not affect everywhere on the planet in the same way. In the Northern Hemisphere, temperatures dropped by about 0.6°C. See Michael E. Mann, 'The Little Ice Age', in Ted Munn (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Global Environmental Change. Volume 1, The Earth System: Physical and Chemical Dimensions of Global Environmental Change*, (5 vols, Chichester, 2002), pp. 504-9. Parker, *Global Crisis*, pp. 3-25, has an analysis of the Little Ice Age, pointing out that in some areas it doubled the risk of crop failure.
[47] Parker, *Global Crisis*, pp. 19 and 58.
[48] Ibid., p. 28.
[49] Ibid., p. xxv.
[50] Ibid., pp. 98-100.

1640s, harvest failures in 1665-8 and 1677-83, all figure in Parker's narrative.[51] Regarding Philip IV, he argues that 'more than any other seventeenth-century ruler, Philip intensified the impact of climate change by disastrous policy choices'. Spain was engaged in unrelenting warfare in the period, sustained by a fiscal policy that Parker describes as 'abysmal'.[52] In Parker's analysis, Spain's decline, tacitly acknowledged, is less a nationalistic and fatalistic narrative than part of a wider context: an example of how global crisis was experienced in what had been Europe's most powerful monarchy.[53] Following Parker, the integration of environmental and natural factors into an analysis of political developments will be a key element of the methodological approach taken in this thesis. Seventeenth-century Seville functions as an urban case-study for global crisis and this thesis will explore how the 'natural synergy' of human and natural factors operated at the level of urban society.

Parker's work, by stressing the interplay between human and natural factors, avoids slipping too far into environmental determinism, as it was not simply a changing climate that resulted in crisis, but instead when it worked together with careless human policy. His case studies show that governments and societies could react very differently to the same events and developments. Emmanuel le Roy Ladurie has also attacked environmental historians who adopt an 'anthrocentric' perspective and use climate merely to 'explain' human crises.[54] This thesis does not seek to use climate as an 'explanation' for human history, in this case Seville's turbulent seventeenth century. My methodology does not attempt a quantitative breakdown of Seville's climate, nor does it attempt to measure the economic cost of damage caused by disasters relating to the environment. What I do stress however is the human consequences of meteorological fluctuation and disaster, and how the human response to these challenges can highlight and reflect underlying structures of thought and governance. I also consider how these reactions interrelated with a wider sense of societal unease, the 'self-perception of decline' identified by Elliott. The

[51] Ibid., pp. 254-90. For a clear, concise description of the Spanish climate and landscape in general, see James Casey, *Early Modern Spain: A Social History* (London, 1999), pp. 8-9.
[52] Parker, *Global Crisis*, p. 289.
[53] He had earlier argued for this in 'El desarrollo de la crisis', in Cayetana Álvarez de Toledo and Geoffrey Parker, *La Crisis de la Monarquía de Felipe IV* (Barcelona, 2006), pp. 19-172.
[54] Ladurie, *Times of Feast, Times of Famine,* pp. 16-7.

history of climate, environment and nature at the level of human cultural responses has not tended to assess the specific impact of urban space on the responses, nor how political responses to the environment were conditioned by cultural factors.

Understanding governmental structures and processes is another vital concern of this thesis. I believe that politics and the environment should be studied together; disasters, for example, are heavily political events. I connect political and environmental history through considering the *asistentes* of Seville and their role in respect to the environment, especially during flooding. In doing so, I try to connect urban narratives to national ones. The *asistente* was part of a political structure that has experienced a thoroughgoing reassessment from historical scholarship in the last few decades.

The Spanish monarchy, the structure of which remained substantively the same throughout the seventeenth century, was in theory conciliar, in that the king relied on the advice and expertise of a number of councils – *consejos* – to govern his kingdom. These councils (each comprising of several men appointed by the king) were either defined by their functional remit – for example the *Consejo de Guerra* and the *Consejo de Hacienda* for war and taxes respectively – or by a specific territorial remit – each individual kingdom that was part of the wider Spanish monarchy had its own council (for instance the *Consejo de Aragón* or the *Consejo de Flandes*). This broad organisational structure had existed since the fifteenth century and the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, before being fully established and expanded by Charles V and Philip II.[55] Of these councils, the *Consejo de Estado* (Council of State) and particularly the *Consejo de Castilla* (Council of Castile), both physically located at the court in Madrid, are the most relevant for Seville. The *Consejo de Estado* advised the king on broad matters of government, whilst the *Consejo de Castilla* had authority over the constituent kingdom of which Seville was a part. The *Consejo de Castilla* was perhaps the most important conciliar body in the government, and a significant sub-body of this council was the *Real Cámara de Castilla*, consisting of a small group of ministers who advised the king on matters of royal patronage and appointment to

[55] Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, pp. 170-1.

administrative and judicial positions across Castile.[56] Although their roles covered every area of government, the influence of the councils could be lessened both by the king (or his close advisers) ignoring their advice when it suited, and by the fact that they lacked manpower of their own, as tax collection and other activities they recommended was carried out by individuals appointed on special commission.[57] The seventeenth century also saw the increased use of specialised *juntas*, emergency councils created to deal with specific incidents, which diluted the power of the regular councils.[58]

Within that structure, local municipalities and their *cabildos* – town or city councils – communicated with the king and his ministers directly. During previous centuries, a representative body of delegates from the city's principal cities (including Seville) had been convened to grant or deny their approval when the king wanted (for example) to issue a new round of taxation. These *Cortes* were barely summoned by Philip IV and not at all by Charles II, as they preferred to deal directly with the representatives (*procuradores*) of the various cities.[59] In terms of the governing of cities or towns, royal power was represented, and directives by the king were enforced by the *corregidores* he placed in each locality, or *corregimiento*. The *asistente* was Seville's equivalent of a *corregidor* and the nature of this official will be further explored in Chapter 1. Their work involved balancing royal demands and expectations with maintaining an active appreciation for local rights – *fueros* – and keeping local residents (particularly noblemen) happy.[60] This structure, both at court and in the towns, cities and territories, depended on the quality of ministers – which became increasingly criticised by domestic and foreign observers throughout the period, as offices became more and more for sale – and the opportunities granted by favouritism and nepotism were extensive.[61] Government in seventeenth-century Spain, despite

[56] They were the chief mechanism for the selection process and appointment of new *asistentes* and feature prominently in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Kamen, *Spain in the Later Seventeenth Century*, p. 23.
[57] Ibid., pp. 24-5.
[58] Such *juntas* were especially prevalent towards the end of Charles II's reign. See Adolfo Carrasco Martínez, 'Los grandes, el poder y la cultura política de la nobleza en el reinado de Carlos II', *Studia historica: Historia moderna*, 20 (1999), p. 128.
[59] Kamen, *Spain in the Later Seventeenth Century*, p. 30.
[60] 'Foral' rights were more prominent, and more vigorously defended, in peripheral kingdoms such as the Crown of Aragon, but existed throughout Castile. Storrs, *Resilience of the Spanish Monarchy*, pp. 192-4.
[61] See the recent study by Alistair Malcolm, *Royal Favouritism and the Governing Elite of the Spanish Monarchy, 1640-1665* (Oxford, 2016).

the volume of bureaucracy, remained a face to face enterprise in which individual connections could be vitally important.

Even from this short description of the Spanish monarchy, it seems clear that the label of 'absolutism' seems a poor fit. The Spanish monarchy has been held up as an example of an 'absolutist' monarchy, increasingly able to impose its will on the territories it controlled through an expanding bureaucracy and other mechanisms, and extracting more and more resources in the transition to a more modern form of state. Absolutism had been seen as the prevailing mode of seventeenth-century government, but is no longer considered a helpful definition, as geographic and administrative limitations left local elites and institutions with a much more immediate influence over communities than isolated royal governors.[62] This consensus has stretched to include Spain and has significant implications for how the position of the *asistentes* and their activity within Seville is understood.

Much of the recent scholarship on early modern Spanish political history has sought to unpick and understand the various mechanisms and relationships through which the monarchy actually operated. Antonio Feros at the end of the twentieth century provided a useful summary of the general trend of scholarship on the Spanish crown and its organisation and functioning up to that point:

> En los últimos años, lo que historiográficamente se había construido como una Monarquía absoluta, centralizada, burocratizada, ha acabado por ser desmantelada. De lo que ahora se habla es de limitaciones, resistencia, descentralización, refeudalización, y con ello de clientelismo nobiliario. El tema central es ahora la dispersión del poder en varios centros, entre varios grupos. En definitiva, lo que interesa ahora a los historiadores no es la creación e imposición de una ideología y de unas estructuras de dominación, sino de las capacidades de individuos, grupos, comunidades y reinos para resister esa ideología y estructuras, y para crear sus propias alternativas discursivas y políticas.[63]

A convincing and thorough example of this interpretation is that by Ruth Mackay, in her *Limits of Royal Authority: Resistance and Obedience in Seventeenth-century Castile*. Mackay is particularly effective at articulating and reconciling the seemingly contradictory tendencies of the

[62] Thomas Munck, *Seventeenth-Century Europe: State, Conflict and the Social Order in Europe, 1598-1700* (Basingstoke, 1990), p. 32.
[63] Antonio Feros, 'Clientelismo y poder monárquico en la España de los siglos XVI y XVII', *Relaciones*, 73:19 (1998), p. 17.

seventeenth-century Spanish monarchy, which she describes as 'a hybrid of elements – localism and centralization; representation and autocracy; traditional aristocracy and modern state-builders; order and improvisation'.[64] By focusing on the challenges of military levies and contributions, Mackay emphasised a 'decentralized, disaggregated, often ad hoc form of rule' characterised by 'systemic flexibility' and 'unsettled, ill-defined lines of command'. Mackay maintains the tendency to dismantle the idea of the Spanish crown as an absolutist monolith, instead pointing out that the people of Castile had expectations and demands of their monarch and his representatives, even as they were subject to royal decrees and orders from above.[65] Helen Nader, meanwhile, has noted the seeming dissonance that 'the most powerful absolute monarchy in early modern Europe governed itself through thousands of direct connections to minute municipal corporations'.[66] Although Seville was hardly 'minute', it also had a direct and personal connection to the king through the *asistente*. Government in Castile was fluid and dynamic, and often involved a process of negotiation between various political actors. The expectations on urban governors from the urban populace, particularly in relation to the environment, will be a theme I develop later.

The result of this historiographical shift has been more specialised studies which emphasise the *ad hoc* and contingent nature of Habsburg rule, and the extent to which Philip IV and Charles II relied on the negotiated support of local elites to govern effectively. Frequently, as suggested by Feros, this process of negotiation has been conceptualised as interactions between political actors identified as 'patrons', 'clients', and 'brokers'. Indeed, recent histories of early modern Spanish political history put emphasis on the existence of client networks, and what has been called 'political clientelism'. Sharon Kettering has described the role of 'patron-broker-client' ties in various historical societies, putting emphasis on brokers, individuals who acted 'as a middleman to arrange an exchange of resources between two parties separated by geography or

[64] Ruth Mackay, *The Limits of Royal Authority: Resistance and Obedience in Seventeenth-century Castile* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 2.
[65] Ibid., pp. 175-7.
[66] Helen Nader, *Liberty in Absolutist Spain: The Habsburg Sale of Towns, 1516-1700* (Baltimore, 1990), p. 207.

personal distance such as differences in rank or office'.[67] Although Kettering does not use early modern Spain as one of her examples, historians have studied the government of the Spanish Habsburgs in similar terms, looking at the role of various mediators and agents of royal power, emphasising the plurality and fluidity of political authority away from the court and Madrid. Often these studies have focused on non-Castilian Spain. Looking at the Crown of Aragon, David Bernabé Gil has sought to erode the impression of government as something imposed by monarchical power on the municipal authorities, emphasising the use of agents at court who represented the cities on an *ad hoc* and fluid basis.[68] Other specialist studies share this concern, elaborating the role of a wide variety of different political actors that do not fit into a dichotomous construction of power between the royal 'centre' and the territorial, or urban, peripheries.

Trying to explain the nature of Habsburg power, José Manuel de Bernardo Ares cautioned against seeing monarchical-aristocratic power as a 'pyramid', and reinterpreted the government of Charles II as instead the result of 'an agreement of reciprocal convenience between king and kingdom', the former conceding the legitimacy of the consensus generated by local assemblies in the latter.[69] Others have acknowledged political agents from a broader social cross-section. Looking at the regional context of Murcia, for example, Ruiz Ibáñez and Muñoz Rodríguez have suggested the role of veterans of the Spanish Habsburgs' military campaigns as agents of soft power who made the two different spaces of power of court and locality 'intelligible' to each other. Through their visibility and role in public ceremony, as loyal men of the crown they 'funcionaban como agentes de propaganda indirecta' of royal service'.[70] Cities and towns have also received new historical investigation, resulting in a better articulation of the relationship between the crown and local elites, frequently a mutually beneficial one.[71]

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[67] Sharon Kettering, 'The Historical Development of Political Clientelism', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* 18:3 (1988), p. 425.
[68] David Bernabé Gil, 'Ambitos de relación entre el poder real y los municipios de la corona de Aragón durante la época foral moderna', *Estudis: Revista de Historia Moderna*, 32 (2006), pp. 49-72.
[69] José Manuel de Bernardo Ares, 'The Aristocratic Assemblies Under the Spanish Monarchy (1680-1700)', *Parliaments, Estates and Representation,* 21:1 (2001), pp. 128 and 137-8.
[70] José J. Ruiz Ibáñez and Julio D. Muñoz Rodríguez, 'Sirviendo a la corte en la aldea, sirviendo la aldea en la corte: veteranos, agentes y medios de relación en el siglo XVII castellano', in Jesús Bravo Lozano (ed.), *Espacios de poder: cortes, ciudades y villas (s.XVI-XVIII)* (Madrid, 2002), vol. 2, pp. 227 and 243-5.
[71] See Mauro Hernández, *A la sombra de la Corona. Poder local y oligarquía Urbana (Madrid, 1606-1808)* (Madrid, 1995), p. 18.

My thesis participates in this historiographical impulse to explore and express the complex, multi-faceted nature of early modern government. The role of the *asistente* might thus be reassessed. Although direct agents of the crown, the *asistentes*' situation often required them to take on the role of conduit between the court and city, representing the latter's interests to the former nearly as often as the reverse. Seville was one of the busiest, most chaotic cities in the early modern Spanish world. A profusion of jurisdictions, institutions, cultures and priorities jostled for pre-eminence. Power could not be exercised without a degree of negotiation. The *asistente* should be situated in this intricate context, which made responding to both quotidian urban issues and even the threat of disaster far from simple.

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ii. The 'city of quiet oblivion': early modern Seville

Seville is located just under a hundred kilometres from the Andalusian coast and a little over four hundred and fifty kilometres from Madrid. Boasting Hercules as its mythic founder, the city was the site of an important Roman settlement named Hispalis which fell under Moorish rule until its 're-conquest' by the Christian forces of King Ferdinand III in 1248. It lies in the fertile plain of the Guadalquivir, at a bend in the river, and had served as a royal residence before the court settled in Madrid in the reign of Philip II (1558-98), with kings and queens housed in the Real Alcázar, the Islamic palace left intact by the conquering army. Seville's Cathedral, meanwhile, was constructed from the fifteenth century around the mosque that had previously existed on the same site. An angel of victory signifying the triumph of the Catholic faith was placed at the top of the minaret which functioned as the new cathedral's bell tower and, now bearing the angel's name of La Giralda, is the most famous sight in Seville. The city's walls had initially been built by the Romans, but were extended by the city's Moorish rulers, and in the seventeenth century still contained within them the majority of what comprised the city of Seville.

For much of this thesis, when I talk about 'Seville', it is the city within the walls that I am principally referring to. An impression of the packed layout of the old walled city can be gleaned from the closest thing to a street map for early modern Seville, the *Plano topográfico* commissioned in 1771 by *asistente* Pablo de Olavide (see Appendix 2). Away from the open space around the Cathedral and a few other landmarks, Seville is defined by tight, medieval alleyways. A maze-like, claustrophobic quality to the city persists today; it is possible to spend what seems like hours, roasting in the Andalusian sun, trying to trace a way back to a street that one had walked down not a moment before. Routes through the city seem to reconfigure themselves when you're not looking, stark, parched stone bending into fresh twists and knots. Onto this chaotic physical layout, a measure of bureaucratic organisation was attempted through the city's division, along parish lines, into neighbourhoods – *collaciones*. Churches lie around every corner, but life seems inexorably drawn to the broader plazas and spaces – today lined by bars – where goods can be traded, people can see and be seen, and claustrophobia gives way to openness and grandeur.

But what about outside the city walls? Seville was not composed of this walled, inner city alone, but extended to a wider territory – the surrounding lands and towns which fell under its jurisdiction and were known as its *tierra*. This *tierra*, extending over hundreds of square kilometres, encompassed over fifty towns – *pueblos* – and stretched far to the northwest and southeast.[72] Despite its dominance and superiority over its hinterland, early modern Seville relied on smaller settlements nearby for basic supplies. Fresh, potable water ran into the city along an aqueduct from springs at Carmona to the northeast, whilst nearby towns such as Alcalá de Guadaíra and Utrera to the southeast supplied most of its bread.[73] Early modern cities, as with modern ones, were connected to the surrounding environment by processes that enmeshed human and natural factors. Historians should be careful of making too much of a distinction between city and country. Although this thesis focuses out of practicality on urban Seville, the implications of

[72] Francisco Morales Padrón, *Historia de Sevilla III. La ciudad del Quinientos* (Seville, 1977), p. 209.
[73] See below, Chapters 3 and 4.

my analysis are not confined to it.[74] Closer to the walled city, there were a number of extramural districts that warrant attention. Whilst walled Seville was on the eastern bank of the Guadalquivir, immediately on the western bank and cross-river from the rest of the city was the neighbourhood of Triana. Despite falling under the same municipal jurisdiction as the walled city, Triana possessed a distinct history and identity. Connected to the rest of the city only by a wooden pontoon bridge and a small fleet of ships that ferried people back and forth, Triana was home for most of the city's industry (polluting and grimy factories being barred from within the walls) and was correspondingly populated by many labourers, alongside sailors.[75] Marginally situated, Triana could be treated accordingly by the city authorities. This marginalisation was most particularly apparent during a flood. When focusing on a single city, it is vital to remain aware of the spatial and topographical realities of the urban environment, and of the social and political implications these realities might engender.

The discovery of the New World in the late fifteenth century had signalled the start of a new era for the city, which took on an imperial role as the official port for trans-Atlantic trade and the site of the official bureaucracy of Spanish empire. On the back of these developments the city experienced a demographic explosion: in the words of Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, sixteenth-century Seville went from being 'una metrópoli regional, con industrias locales', into the realm of 'relaciones mundiales'.[76] Its population base, already diverse given the presence of *moriscos* (former Muslims who had, publicly at least, converted to Christianity to remain in Spain) and the *conversos*, descendants of former Jews, became ever more international as financiers, traders and sailors from all over Europe passed through or settled in the city.[77] Its population by 1600 was over one hundred and twenty thousand, although the expulsion of the *moriscos* in 1609 reduced

[74] The classic study of this theme is Vincent Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (London, 1991).
[75] Mercedes Díaz Garrido, *Triana y la orilla derecha del Guadalquivir: Evolución de una forma urbana desde sus orígenes hasta mediados del siglo XX* (Seville, 2010), p. 196.
[76] Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *Orto y Ocaso de Sevilla* (Seville, 1974), p. 28.
[77] Some 6,500 *moriscos* lived in Seville at the turn of the century. The majority of these, 30%, lived in Triana. See Michel Boeglin, 'Demografía y sociedad moriscas en Sevilla. El Padrón de 1589', *Chronica Nova*, 33 (2007), pp. 197-8.

that number.[78] Seville's geographical situation made it well-suited to serve its new remit as imperial entrepôt – more easily defensible than somewhere on the coast and already equipped with stone walls.

Within the city, there existed a huge gulf between rich and poor, a gulf that was deepened by the unequal distribution of the fruits of empire and the arrival of the desperate and destitute that the city's wealth encouraged.[79] Alongside lavish Renaissance palaces such as the Casa de Pilatos, there were the crammed habitations known as *corrales de vecinos* (literally 'resident dwellings') a series of homes within one building, constructed around a central patio, where families and communities lived in close proximity.[80] The default urban unit in seventeenth-century Seville was the local parish, and the rhythms of life were defined by regular participation in religious ceremony and festival. During Holy Week – *santa semana* – processional sculptures commissioned by confraternities of lay parishioners presented a sombre, emotive spectacle, whilst theological debates animated the passions of Seville's wide religious community, including a push to canonise the king who had conquered the city from the Moors, Ferdinand III ('el Santo Rey' as he was known in the city).[81] Home to Spain's first Inquisitorial tribunal, the Catholic Church and faith was one of the vital, central impulses of Seville's thrumming urban activity.[82]

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[78] Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 68. Ortiz estimates that in addition to the people counted by an ecclesiastical census of 1588, which had the city's population at 120,519, many would have avoided inclusion, and the clergy were likely excluded; he thus suggests that the population may have reached 140,000. For the expulsion of the Moors, see Boeglin's article cited above, and his 'La expulsión de los moriscos de Andalucía y sus límites. El caso de Sevilla (1610-1613)', *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna*, 36 (2011), pp. 89-107. Boeglin describes how the expulsion was inexpertly carried out, and many *moriscos* likely remained in the city, having changed their names. For another example from outside Seville, see Trevor J. Dadson, *Tolerance and Coexistence in Early Modern Spain: old Christians and Moriscos in the Campo de Calatrava* (Woodbridge, 2014).

[79] See Juan Ignacio Carmona, *El extenso mundo de la pobreza: la otra cara de la Sevilla imperial* (Seville, 1993), for the subject of the city's poor.

[80] Francisco Morales Padrón, *Los corrales de vecinos (informe para su estudio)* (Seville, 1974).

[81] For confraternity confessional sculptures, see Susan Verdi Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden Age Spain: Sevillian Confraternities and the Processional Sculpture of Holy Week* (Princeton, 1998). For Ferdinand III's canonisation process, an unpublished thesis by Amanda Jaye Wunder argues that through the canonisation efforts and artistic patronage Seville 'waged a war against its own decline': Wunder, 'Search for Sanctity in Baroque Seville: The Canonization of San Fernando and the Making of Golden-Age Culture, 1624-1729' (Princeton University D.Phil. thesis, 2002), p. iv.

[82] See Michel Boeglin, *Inquisición y contrarreforma: el Tribunal del Santo Oficio de Sevilla (1560-1700)* (Seville, 2006). Seville was also a city of sin, however. See Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Crime and Society in Early Modern Seville* (Hanover N.H, 1980), for an account of its bustling criminal 'underworld'.

Seville's central role in the cultural achievements of early modern Spain can also be acknowledged. In art, Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez (1599-1660) was born in Seville and made his name there before moving to Madrid and the court in the early 1620s, whilst later in the century Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-82) followed a similar career trajectory. Both count among the finest painters of Spain's so-called Golden Age and in their early works both present the historian with glimpses of the urban quotidian in early modern Seville.[83] Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616, outside my period; but his work remains current for the rest of the seventeenth century) spent time in Seville's royal jail at the end of the sixteenth century before writing *Don Quixote* (1605 and 1613), and the social contrasts of the city can be read in 'Rinconete y Cortadillo' and other stories in his *Novelas ejemplares* (1613). Seville was also home to flourishing literary societies, a theatre and a number of active printing houses.[84] The city's connection to the New World meant it was a focal point for trade in books, despite the limitations imposed by Inquisitorial censors and indexes, and one of the main centres for the publication and dissemination of news in early modern Spain (the first Spanish gazette was published in Seville in 1618).[85] This city, as other cities, was a hub, a nexus – of creativity, trade, and information. Despite the vibrancy of visual and written culture, much of life in seventeenth-century Seville would have been oral. Whether in the bustle of markets such as that held weekly on Calle Feria (still active to this day) or in the crowding of workers into cramped *tabernas* and *bodegones* (small taverns for everyday eating and drinking) that the city authorities desperately tried to regulate (with limited success), rumours and gossip would proliferate and spread through the city.

There was much to talk about, and not all of it good. Seville began the seventeenth century as the pre-eminent city of the Spanish empire, a hub of world trade, its creative energies

[83] See Tanya J. Tiffany, *Diego Velázquez's Early Paintings and the Culture of Seventeenth-Century Seville* (Pennsylvania, 2012).
[84] See Joaquín Hazañas y la Rúa, *Noticias de las academias literarias, artísticas y científicas de Sevilla en los siglos XVII y XVIII* (Seville, 1888). For the printing houses – at least in the first half of the century – see Aurora Domínguez Guzmán, *La imprenta en Sevilla en el siglo XVII, 1601-1650: (catálogo y análisis de su producción)* (Seville, 1992). Seville's *Coliseo* theatre experienced a dangerous seventeenth century, burning down in 1620, 1659 and 1692. Theatrical performances were also banned briefly in 1679, after being blamed for disasters such as plague. See Francisco Morales Padrón, *Memorias de Sevilla (Noticias sobre el siglo XVII)* (Cordoba, 1981), pp. 153-4 and Perry, *Crime and Society*, pp. 153-7.
[85] Carlos Alberto González Sánchez, *Los mundos del libro: medios de difusión de la cultura occidental en las Indias de los siglos XVI y XVII* (Seville, 1999) and Javier Díaz Noci, 'Dissemination of News in the Spanish Baroque', *Media History*, 18:3-4 (2012), pp. 409 and 411.

inspiring Cervantes and Velázquez, its bustling population the most diverse in Iberia and one of the most numerous in Europe. By the death of Charles II in 1700, however, the city was in the process of losing its right to the Atlantic trade to Cádiz; its population had been halved by devastating plague, and a century of intense and unrelenting environmental challenges had battered the city's infrastructure and stretched the wherewithal of municipal finances to breaking point.

Favoured under the corrupt rule of Philip III and the duke of Lerma, early in the reign of Philip IV there were already tensions emerging between city and crown.[86] During the royal visit of the new king to the city in 1624, the only royal visit of the century, the count-duke of Olivares and the *asistente* worked hard to secure the support of the city for the former's reform agenda, in the face of popular opposition that spilled over into attempted violence against the *asistente*, Fernando Ramírez Fariñas.[87] These tensions were exacerbated by the sale to Olivares of the jurisdiction of Sanlucar – which gave Olivares ducal control over the town of Sanlúcar la Mayor at the expense of Seville's city council – and popular ire was expressed again in the angry reaction to the municipal government's handling of the 'Great Flood' of 1626, which caused immense damage in the city.[88] Domínguez Ortiz sees the outbreak of war with Portugal a few years later, in 1640, as 'un grave contratiempo' for Seville, due to the recurring and serious financial and manpower demands it placed on the city, a strategically important mustering point on the way to the Portuguese front.[89] And in 1649, Seville endured what has been interpreted by many as a century-defining plague.[90] Demographically, the city's population was halved at a stroke, one hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants being cut to some sixty thousand in just six devastating months.[91] On the heels of pestilence, the 1650s began with dearth and monetary fluctuations, leading to the urban revolt of 1652, part of a wider outpouring of anger throughout

[86] My summary of Seville's seventeenth century follows, unless otherwise specified, Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla*, pp. 15-34.
[87] For this incident, see J.H. Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline*, pp. 153-4.
[88] For this flood see Chapter 5, pp. 200-39.
[89] Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 23.
[90] For example Carmona says that post-1649 'Sevilla ya no era Sevilla', *El extenso mundo de la pobreza*, p. 183.
[91] Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 77.

Andalusia. The reign of Charles II was less tumultuous (peace with Portugal from 1668 lessened the pressures that war entailed in particular), but the mid-1680s saw another period of environmental difficulty, drought and scarcity leading into storms, floods and despair, as described by Francisco de Godoy. The mood in the city at century's end was one of loss and dismay; Seville's pre-eminence had been completely eroded, a victim of the seventeenth-century 'fatal synergy' of human and natural challenges as described by Parker.

It is easy to see why Seville's history has encouraged a close association with the traditional narrative of Spain's decline. The spectre of decline has haunted Seville, as the city seems to reflect the wider fortunes of the Spanish monarchy at this time. The same narrative arc has been identified – a rise to primacy with the accumulation of wealth and power, followed by a sobering and painful decline. One of Antonio Domínguez Ortiz's works refers in its title to the 'sunrise and sunset' of Seville.[92] Seville's early modern history has thus been inextricably tied to the 'decline of Spain' thesis. The association, although partly justified by events, has come at a cost to historical understanding. Scholarship on the city in the 1600s has been deeply uneven and patchy, heavily weighted to the first half of the century. Whilst the plague of 1649 was certainly a shattering moment, interpreting post-epidemic Seville as a 'different' city has adversely affected serious study of the second half of the seventeenth century. Mary Elizabeth Perry has perhaps best summed up the assumptions surrounding Seville in the late seventeenth century by stating that in the reign of Charles II Seville had 'retired into quiet oblivion'.[93] The city is seen as a shadow of its former self, its wealth and its population devastated. Jesús Aguado de los Reyes published a study that analysed wills and inventories to investigate social class in seventeenth-century Seville, but concluded his detailed investigations in 1655, citing a drop in the volume of surviving documentary evidence for later in the century, demonstrating what he saw as 'una concordia entre el volumen documental y la vitalidad de la ciudad'.[94] The city's lack of 'vitality' was thus reflected in a lack of paperwork. There were fewer people, so in a literal sense the city did have less 'vitality'; but the implication is of a loss of energy, that the spark had gone from Seville's

[92] Domínguez Ortiz, *Orto y Ocaso de Sevilla*.
[93] Perry, *Crime and Society*, p. 8.
[94] Jesús Aguado de los Reyes, *Riqueza y sociedad en la Sevilla del siglo XVII* (Seville, 1994), pp. 16-7.

self-belief. If Seville's history has seemed to invite a contrast of boom then bust, it is fair to say that the boom has received rather more attention than the bust. When the decline of Seville has been analysed, it is typically the reasons behind the decline rather than its consequences that are emphasised, as in Domínguez Ortiz's *Orto y Ocaso de Sevilla*.[95]

What have been seen as the central themes of the history of early modern Seville have further encouraged this uneven chronological emphasis. As the location for the House of Trade (*Casa de Contratación*) and Council of the Indies (*Consejo de Indias*), Seville was of special importance for Spain's imperial system, and welcomed the yearly silver shipments from the American continent. This role caused its demographic growth in the sixteenth century and promoted its national importance. A wealth of research has explored aspects of the resulting exchange: Huguette and Pierre Chaunu's *Séville et l'Atlantique* for example used eight volumes to track the silver flotillas.[96] Another prominent theme has been plague and public health, again an unsurprising focus given the impact of plague on early modern Seville. Alexandra Parma and Noble David Cook have written a detailed micro-history of the civic response to an outbreak in 1580, demonstrating both how the plague progressed within a territory and the response of the city council and the *asistente*.[97] Kristy Wilson Bowers has approached a broader range of urban responses to plague rather than focusing on a specific outbreak, but has shown the negotiation and jurisdictional manoeuvrings that might result from a serious challenge such as that of plague.[98] Bowers's study takes less interest in the years after 1649, however, as a much-reduced population made the spread of plague less rapid, although the city remained understandably terrified of the possibility. These two studies both use plague and public health as a way to explore political and cultural structures and processes, an approach that this thesis will partly emulate in its later focus on flooding and the role of the *asistente* in implementing environmental urban policies.

Recent Spanish-language histories on Seville's urban infrastructure have demonstrated that such an approach need not neglect the late seventeenth century. Juan Ignacio Carmona has

[95] Domíguez Ortiz, *Orto y Ocaso de Sevilla*, Chapters 6 and 7.
[96] Chaunus, *Séville et l'Atlantique, 1504-1650*, see pp. 8-9 above.
[97] Alexandra Parma and Noble David Cook, *The Plague Files: Crisis management in sixteenth-century Seville* (Baton Rouge, 2009).
[98] Kristy Wilson Bowers, *Plague and Public Health in Early Modern Seville* (Rochester, 2013).

examined a wide range of quotidian urban issues – including cleanliness, diet, hygiene, road maintenance, and drainage – and in doing so demonstrates the difficulties faced by the city authorities in imposing regulations and directives.[99] Although Carmona emphasises (perhaps excessively) the squalor and dirtiness of early modern Seville, drawing attention to the political implications of quotidian concerns contributes to a better understanding of Seville as a lived-in urban space. In particular he highlights how difficult it was for the urban government to impose regulations and decrees on a population comfortable with bending the rules.[100] Seville's water supply, meanwhile, has been thoroughly studied by Manuel Fernández Chaves, specifically the city's supply of potable water, which was distributed only under licence from the king, leading to jurisdictional conflict and protracted legal action.[101] The urban environment could provoke tension in relations between the royal centre and the urban periphery. Officials under supposedly royal direction were also thrust into local, urban concerns.

These cited studies show that historians of Seville are increasingly willing to research how the early modern city managed its basic resources and dealt with the immediate environment, built and natural, whilst also undertaking research that covers the entire century. One of the concerns of this thesis will be to participate in this trend. I also hope to fill a lacuna in the scholarship. The *asistente* has not been the subject of enough analysis, given the importance of the city and the men who held the post. There has not been any concerted study on the position has a whole, and only a few articles that either explore one specific aspect or cover the *asistente* tangentially.[102] By examining the position of *asistente*, focusing on the government of the city as a physical and hands-on process, and considering instances of flooding across almost the entire

[99] Juan Ignacio Carmona, *Crónica urbana del malvivir (S.XIV-XVII): insalubridad, desamparo y hambre en Sevilla* (Seville, 2000).
[100] Ibid., pp. 20-1.
[101] Manuel Fernández Chaves, *Política y administración del abastecimiento de agua en Sevilla durante la edad moderna* (Sevilla: Diputación de Sevilla, 2012). See also Chapter 4 of this thesis.
[102] The former include Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, 'Salario y atribuciones de los Asistentes de Sevilla', *Archivo Hispalense. Revista Histórica, Literaria y Artística*, 20 (1946), pp. 207-13 and Teodoro Hampe Martínez, 'Esbozo de una transferencia política: asistentes de Sevilla en el gobierno virreinal de México y Perú', *Historia Mexicana*, 41:1 (1991), pp. 49-81. For the latter, see the work of José Ignacio Fortea Pérez, which I acknowledge in Chapter 1, pp. 45-6.

century, I hope to make a significant contribution to historical scholarship on the city. Before going further, however, I need to give an overview of Seville's political organisation.

The main organ of municipal government in Seville was the city council, or *cabildo*. In the sources it is sometimes referred to through the metonym 'city'. In this thesis, I will use the English 'city council' to refer to the *cabildo* of Seville. Its structure and regulations can be consulted in the early modern *Ordenanzas*, a compendium of directives, laws and customs for the city, initially printed in 1527 and reprinted with a few additions and emendations in 1632. In seventeenth-century Spain it was by no means a given that a municipality would have its laws and procedural traditions codified, compiled, and readily accessible in this way. Madrid, for example, lacked such a compilation until 1661.[103] Seville's city council had been reorganised after King Ferdinand III's conquest of the city in 1248, following the grant of the same *fueros* (rights) that had been conceded to Toledo by Alfonso VI in the eleventh century. These established the rights of the citizens (*ciudadanos*) at the same time as laying down the city's political organisation. At one point the *Ordenanzas* make clear that any orders or letters received by the king which went against 'los privilegios, y ordenamientos' granted to the city did not have to be followed. Part of the function of the city council was to guard and maintain these privileges and rights against royal infraction.[104]

The city council met in the morning on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, in their chambers on Plaza de San Francisco, in the heart of the city.[105] This building had been developed on the site of a Franciscan monastery between 1527 and 1534, as previously the council had met in cramped conditions adjoining Seville Cathedral. The new quarters were constructed during an important era of urbanisation for the city and displayed iconography which celebrated Charles V's imperial aspirations alongside the city's mythical past.[106] In terms of membership, the council was

[103] Victor Pérez Escolano and Fernando Villanueva Sandino (eds.), introduction to *Ordenanzas de Sevilla* (Seville, 1975), p. xii.
[104] *Ordenanzas de Sevilla*, fo. 65v.
[105] Ibid., fo. 1r-v.
[106] Alfredo J. Morales Martínez, 'Las Casas Consistoriales', in Benito Navarrete Prieto and Marcos Fernández Gómez (eds.), *Historia y Patrimonio del Ayuntamiento de Sevilla* (Seville, 2014), pp. 79-89.

principally comprised of an oligarchic body of *regidores* (councilmen), or *veinticuatros*; so named for their ostensible number, a number that by the seventeenth century had grown beyond twenty-four to fifty-two, as the office became purchasable in the 1500s.[107] The *veinticuatros* possessed a vote on decisions that had to be taken, and votes were totted up on a simple majority basis so that the proposal with the most votes was agreed. Even within the body of *veinticuatros* there was an established hierarchy of seniority though, indicated by the stipulation in the *Ordenanzas* that within the council chamber the eldest *veinticuatro* was to sit first. All *veinticuatros* were required to be present at every session of the council, and were fined for every session missed.[108]

As a homogenous socio-economic group, the councilmen shared overarching concerns. The *asistente*, as far as possible, had to maintain the placidity and cooperation of these nobles. The monarchy had decided in the sixteenth century that *veinticuatros* could only be taken from the nobility, and the social prestige afforded by holding the office encouraged a venal culture in the seventeenth century.[109] Additionally, the scope for personal interests (and indeed rivalries between councilmen) to intrude on the conduct of urban government was large, and the *Ordenanzas* suggest concerns over corruption and nepotism. For example, it was forbidden for council members with a vote to live together, and if something was being discussed in a meeting that had a direct bearing on one of its voting members, that member had to leave the chamber during the discussion.[110] Acting as a *veintiquatro* was not just a simple matter of discussing and then voting on what needed to be done. Direct action was also regularly required of the members of Seville's city council. During a crisis *veintiquatros* were expected to participate directly, often acting as overseers and supervisors for whatever relief efforts were required.

A number of other officials in possession of a vote attended the council's meetings. These men usually had more specific responsibilities. The *alcalde mayor* was a legal officer and judge of the city council that heard cases in the first instance. They shared a number of duties with the

[107] Morales Padrón, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 215 and Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 95.
[108] *Ordenanzas de Sevilla*, fo. 1v and 2v. The fine was 1 *real*.
[109] Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla*, pp. 95-6.
[110] *Ordenanzas de Sevilla*, 4r and 6r.

office of the *asistente*, for instance yearly visits to Seville's *tierra* to check boundaries and that law and order was being properly carried out.[111] The *alguazil mayor* and his *alguaciles*, meanwhile, worked more directly to maintain law and order in Seville, for example when performing nightly patrols as part of their brief to guard 'los ordenamientos, y los buenos usos, y costumbres de la dicha ciudad'.[112] The *alguazil mayor* could not be a native or resident of Seville itself, as questions of law and order could not be entrusted to anyone already involved in local rivalries and disputes. Also possessing a vote in the council and, like the *asistente*, representing royal interests, was the *alcaide de los alcázares y atarazanas*, who possessed jurisdiction over the royal palace grounds, appointing guards and gardeners, and ensuring that the king's possessions and privileges in respect to the palace and its grounds were respected (most especially the water that ran into the city down an aqueduct from Carmona).[113]

In addition to these officials, there were individuals at many of the council's sessions who were not able to vote. The *alférez mayor*, for example, was the leader of the city militia, and guarded the keys to the city. Given that Seville rarely called up its militia, and when troops were raised they fell under the direction of the *asistente*, the position was largely honorific and, increasingly, up for sale, if only to *vecinos*.[114] Also present at certain sessions were a large body of *jurados*, locally elected representatives of the different neighbourhood parishes (*collaciones*) of Seville. These 'popular' officials, increasingly noble and oligarchic in practice, were normally only invited to the meetings when new directives were promulgated, but they did meet in their own *cabildo de jurados* where they discussed local matters that could then be brought to meetings of the city council if required. They had a duty to report on 'agravios y perjuicios' being experienced by the pueblo so that 'remedios' could be found.[115] Finally, and perhaps most vitally, there were a number of scribes – *escribanos* – working to ensure the meetings ran smoothly and

[111] Ibid., fo. 7v-11r.
[112] Ibid., fo. 12v-13v.
[113] Fernández Chaves, *Política y administración*, pp. 107-117 and 234, and pp. 171-81 of this thesis.
[114] Morales Padrón, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 214.
[115] *Ordenanzas de Sevilla*, fo. 15r-v.

on time, who took minutes of the matters discussed.[116] The *escribanos* were of great importance in the basic functioning of the council sessions, and also in determining their agendas and outcomes. Not only did they record in writing what transpired, they also organised and structured the outline of the sessions themselves, reading through petitions and deciding the order in which matters would be discussed. It was their duty to ensure that the affairs from one week did not spill over into the next. They were therefore advised in the city's *Ordenanzas* to condense and provide brief summaries of the matters presented to them, a task that provided opportunities to distort or omit.[117] Royally appointed, the *escribanos* were nevertheless usually selected from the local nobility, and traditionally from the Pineda family.[118] The scribes were intricately involved in local intrigues, and were key members of the city council.

Given the number of potential participants and the breadth of potential matters for discussion, it is not surprising that Seville's city council meetings were chaotic and fluid occasions. Petitioners would frequently seek to manipulate the system to secure a favourable outcome. For example, it was rare that all the council's members would be present from the start of a meeting, instead arriving sporadically once the session was already under way. Enterprising petitioners might therefore attempt to force their concern to be discussed at the start of the session, before dissenting voices could arrive, and rely on the support of allies within the session to get their matter favourably resolved. The *Ordenanzas* cautioned specifically against this tactic, stating that the *escribanos* should be on the lookout for such petitioners and instead make a note of their issue and delay its hearing until later in the session.[119] Additionally, mention should be paid to the city council's agents at court. These *procuradores* would maintain a correspondence with the city council, petitioning for and representing its interests to the monarchy. This channel of influence to the crown ran parallel to that of the *asistente*. More research needs to be done on these figures, whose work is evident on a number of occasions in this thesis.

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[116] See below, p. 37, for a description of the city council archive, where much of this scribal output ended up.
[117] *Ordenanzas de Sevilla*, fo. 2r.
[118] Morales Padrón, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 216. The Pinedas had been established as the *escribanos* of the city since at least the late-fifteenth century. See José María Navarro Saínz, *El concejo de Sevilla en el reinado de Isabel I (1474-1504)* (Seville, 2007), pp. 428-31.
[119] *Ordenanzas de Sevilla*, fo. 1v.

At the top of this structure, at least ostensibly, was the *asistente*, appointed by the king to act as the senior royal representative in the city and to govern not only the city itself, but also the wider territory of Seville. Council sessions could not begin without either the *asistente*'s presence, or that of one of his *tenientes* – his direct assistants, normally appointed by the incumbent *asistente* himself.[120] He functioned as a chair for the meetings but also, unusually for such governor positions in the Spanish monarchy, he possessed a vote. This vote distinguished the *asistente* from the equivalent position of *corregidor* elsewhere in Castile. Not only did the *asistentes* possess a vote, but this was a vote with special weighting – worth a third of all councilmen present, plus one. This arrangement had been in place since the position was first introduced in the late medieval period (see Chapter 1 below, pp. 42-8, for a fuller history of the post's background). They thus had substantial scope to intervene in the running of the city to suit the monarchy's interests and were, especially given Seville's significance, important men within the kingdom. Ortiz de Zúñiga, in his annals of the city, described how the extra authority of the *asistente*'s special voting privilege was 'unica en estos Reinos'.[121] Their jurisdiction extended over the *tierra* of Seville, though in practice this authority was limited to yearly inspections, and the routine tasks delegated to *tenientes*. It was an important position, with a challenging brief, and in the next chapter I will describe the history and background to the role more fully.

Seville was a lived-in space with intense quotidian pressures. Among those that would be familiar to a twenty-first-century European municipality (infrastructure, maintenance, crime, regulation of business, etc.) we might add more specifically 'early modern' issues: repeated plague, near-constant warfare, fear of religious heterodoxy. Although the extent of urbanisation since the late nineteenth century has encouraged those studying the city to emphasise the impact of industrialisation and globalisation, the following sentiment from the preface to the recent *New Blackwell Companion to the City* is equally applicable to early modern Seville: 'The rates of growth, diversity of population, and complexity of their [cities'] activities, as well as the scale of

[120] Ibid., fo. 2v. The right of the *asistente* to name his own *tenientes* was only guaranteed towards the start of my period of study after forceful insistence by the count of Puebla del Maestre. See his letter to Philip IV, 16 June 1626, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 19.
[121] Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales*, p. 799.

the problems (and possibilities) they pose, are breathtaking.'[122] Just as the challenges of maintaining and managing an early modern city were not so different from those faced by cities today, the general political structures that confronted these challenges are recognisable. In seventeenth-century Seville, as today, a city council of (at least in theory) representative officials debated issues in assembly and, often in tandem with local experts, worked both to deal with the concerns and complaints of local residents whilst also responding to mandates from the political 'centre'. The concerns of the monarchy, and how these impacted on the city, were often at odds with these urban preoccupations. The environment is a good example of this disconnect, and narratives of decline and crisis might be recast as failures in centre-periphery relations, and mismanagement of environmental shocks and disasters. At the same time, the hands-on and immediate nature of government has to be emphasised.

The sources and archival evidence I have used in this project come both from Seville itself and from the centralised bureaucratic machinery of the Spanish monarchy. To gain a full appreciation of the position of *asistente* this dual perspective was necessary. In Madrid I worked in the Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), which holds the consultas (written reports and recommendations) of the *Real Cámara de Castilla*. I have used this material principally to trace the selection of *asistentes* and the monarchy's wider thinking in respect to the city (see Chapter 2). This archive was founded in 1866 to receive, from various organisms of the Spanish monarchy, those documents which had not yet been sent to the Archivo General de Simancas (the royal archive founded in 1540 and then expanded by Philip II in 1588). The AHN received substantial material from both the *Consejo de Castilla* and *Real Cámara*, and the organisation of the archive initially reflected the nineteenth-century surge in theorising about archival practice and the widespread founding of national archives in the aftermath to the fall of the Ancien Régime.[123] I found the *Cámara*'s consultas in respect to the *asistente* all in the same file but it is not clear if

[122] Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson, Preface to Bridge and Watson (eds.), *The New Blackwell Companion to the City* (Malden, 2011), p. xiii.
[123] See Luis Miguel de la Cruz Herranz, 'La organización de los fondos del Archivo Histórico Nacional (1866-1989)', *Boletín de la ANABAD*, 46:1 (1996), pp. 78-94.

this reflects a division that existed in the bureaucratic practice of the *Cámara* in the seventeenth century. As will be made clear in Chapter 2, however, the division is not necessary to illustrate the importance placed on Seville by the crown (admittedly for its own ends).

The Archivo Municipal de Sevilla (AMS), my other main archive, was also reorganised in the late nineteenth century and is still arranged along the lines established then. This archive contains the paperwork produced by Seville's city council, including copies of royal decrees. The latter, along with decrees issued by the city, were often printed. The organisation of the AMS can sometimes seem arbitrary – divided into sections, Sección XIII for example contains 'Papeles Importantes', documents which were considered in the 1860s to be of particular interest to students of the city's history.[124] The minutes of the city council are to be found in Sección X and in the seventeenth century two parallel minute books were maintained by two different scribes, one of which kept a much briefer record of events, sometimes no more than a list of attendees. Due to time constraints, the chronological extent of my project and the great challenge posed by the handwriting, I have not used this Sección as much as I would have liked. I consulted the entries in the minutes exclusively around the dates of the flooding disasters that I have studied, to gain an impression of the council's working practices during such times. I did not, however, study the minutes during the more regular course of business, beyond scanning them to gain a sense of their structure. Future studies might make further use of them, to establish with more comprehensive evidence how far environmental and climatic issues were discussed. I have made more use of Sección IV, 'Escribanias de Cabildo del siglo XVII', containing decrees issued by the city and various thematically organised manuscripts.[125]

I have supplemented these archives with further research in the Biblioteca Nacional de España, the Biblioteca Colombina in Seville (a collection, housed in part of the Cathedral and connected to its archives, founded from the library of Ferdinand Columbus, son of Christopher Columbus, containing many interesting manuscripts concerning early modern Seville) and the British Library. I have used printed sources throughout the thesis, including Diego Ortiz de

[124] AMS, *Sección XIII Papeles Importantes (índice de materias) Siglos XVI-XIX*.
[125] AMS, *Indice de la sección cuarta del Archivo Municipal de Sevilla, Escribanias de Cabildo del Siglo XVII, Arregladas en 1860, y comprendidas en 43 Volúmenes en Fólio*.

Zúñiga's (1636-80) *Annales* of the city. Published in 1677, and therefore unfortunately not covering the final years of Charles II's reign in the city, the annals put Seville's affairs in the wider context of the Spanish monarchy and show how invested the city's nobility were in its success – the Ortiz de Zúñiga family was heavily involved in Seville's government whilst Diego himself was a *veintiquatro* and a member of the Order of Santiago.[126] In writing his history, he made use of archival and manuscript sources within the city. Finally, of course, I have also relied heavily on the endeavours of previous historians of the city, whose contributions will be apparent from the footnotes to my study.

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In this introduction I began with the general – describing early modern Spain and the meta-narratives of decline and crisis that have engulfed it – before moving on to the specific – introducing seventeenth-century Seville, in particular its political organisation and the situation of the *asistente* within that structure. For both of these perspectives, I have suggested that an environmental focus can highlight how real lives were affected by broad historical change. In the rest of the thesis, this progression will be undertaken in reverse – I will detail the role of *asistente*, what the expectations were of the post and of early modern government in a more general sense, and how the governments of Philip IV and Charles II dealt with Seville's governing (highlighting a dissonance between urban needs and royal priorities, a real consequence of what has loosely been labelled 'decline'). I will show that some of the most urgent political requirements were environmental, and explore the city's infrastructure to contextualise the repeated flooding of the city in the century, which I then analyse, particularly the 'Great Flood' of 1626 and the flooding that Godoy described in 1683-4. I will try to retain an appreciation for long-term change, but also fully situate events in their immediate context. By focusing on the *asistente*, the expectations placed on them, their duties, and their policies and behaviour in respect to the river and flooding

[126] Indeed, one of his other surviving works is a genealogy of his family, *Discurso genealogico de los Ortizes de Sevilla* (Cádiz, 1670).

in particular, I hope to provide a common thread linking these themes together. As environmental issues become ever more urgent and pressing in our world, it is vital that historians consider how the ways in which societies organise and govern themselves have meaningful and direct implications for how they respond to and manage environment and disaster.

1. '...como padre del pueblo': The *corregidores* of Castile, the *asistente* of Seville and the *Política para corregidores* of Jerónimo Castillo de Bobadilla

On 14 June 1617 King Philip III (1578-1621, king 1598-1621) wrote to Seville's city council explaining that Alonso de Bracamonte y Guzmán (1563-1623) would be taking up the position of *asistente* in the city for the period of at least a year. The letter is a good introduction to how the role was understood at the start of the seventeenth century, and helps to contextualise the later developments, trends and events I explore in the following chapters. Philip III explained how Bracamonte was to work to enact the king's justice in 'los pleytos y causas ciuiles y criminales que en esa d[ic]ha ciudad estan pendientes y pendieren durante el tiempo que tubiere el dicho oficio'.[1] He was to follow the *Capítulos* laid down for the 'Corregidores de nuestros Reynos' and make sure the 'caminos y campos' around the city in his wider territorial jurisdiction were kept secure. The king put emphasis on the regulating of the city's food supply – Bracamonte had to take special care to make sure the grain storehouses were well-stocked and that the royal regulations in respect to them were being followed, whilst he was to curb the extent of illegal hunting and fishing taking place, which was creating a shortage of fish in particular.[2] He was to ensure royal decrees and procedures were being followed in the 'lugares' of Seville's *tierra,* and that the conditions of Christian piety established in the Council of Trent were being met. Particular attention was to be given to the stipulation that Bracamonte would not return to the royal court within the first ninety days of his taking up the post – instead he was to become familiar with his new jurisdiction. In return, the city council were to pledge to do all they could to assist in the 'buena gouernacion de aquella Republica' (Seville).[3] Subsequent correspondence between Philip III and Bracamonte illustrates that the *asistente* was also involved in royal tax

[1] *Provisión Real de Felipe III ortogando el título de asistente de Seville a Alonso de Bracamonte Guzmán, Conde de Peñaranda, en lugar de Diego Sarmiento de Sotomayor, Conde de Salvatierra*, AHN Sección Nobleza, Archivo de los Duques de Frías, C.25, D.19, fo. 1r.
[2] Ibid., fo. 1v-2r.
[3] Ibid., fo. 2v-3r.

collection and overseeing the city's militia.[4] Even from the letter of announcement, however, it is clear that the *asistente* was involved in urban government at all levels – enforcing royal justice and enacting the king's orders, but also managing the city's core infrastructure and ensuring supply levels were maintained.

The *asistentes* were the royally appointed governors of Seville. They functioned as the figureheads of urban rule from when the position was created in 1478 until the reform of the position in the first half of the nineteenth century. Within the dates of this study, 1621-1700, the position was institutionally stable, and the overall responsibilities matched those described by Philip III. However, the *asistentes* of these years confronted some of the most profound challenges to urban government in Seville's entire history. What was the history of the position, though, and how it was understood and articulated in contemporary political thought? The assumptions and expectations surrounding government that arose filtered down into how the *asistente* acted in respect to the environment and disaster.

I will provide a new perspective on the main contemporary text for understanding how the role of urban governors was understood – the *Política para corregidores* by Jerónimo Castillo de Bobadilla (1547-1615?), first published in 1597. This work remained important throughout the seventeenth century – it was routinely cited in legal disputes in Seville as a standard text; it describes a method of rule which was paternalistic, but which encouraged governors not to be afraid to prioritise local, urban concerns over royal interest. I place this book in the context of conduct books and the other sources of instruction and guidance that existed for *corregidores* (and hence *asistentes*). It has previously been considered mainly as a legal text, or for its political thought, but I hope to highlight how it made specific recommendations for governing urban spaces.

I also hope to give a sense of some of the men who held the post in these years. I have provided a full list of these men in Appendix 1, and in this chapter I will draw attention to some of the more noteworthy figures. *Asistentes* were usually important individuals who had already

[4] *Cartas de Felipe III al Conde de Peñaranda, asistente de Sevilla, sobre asuntos relativos al buen gobierno de aquella ciudad*, AHN Sección Nobleza, Archivo de los Duques de Frías, C.25, D.20-26.

held or went on to hold senior positions in the royal court. This picture will be enlarged in Chapter 2 through a study on the selection and appointment process for new *asistentes*.

From the moment they were appointed, the *asistente* of Seville was under pressure to satisfy a broad and frequently conflicting set of demands. Arguably no position is more suitable for the historian of early modern Spain who wishes to investigate gaps between the ideal and the reality of statecraft. The ideals of rule inculcated in seventeenth-century Spanish statesmen were tested by jurisdictional conflict, environmental difficulties and disasters.

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i. The corregidores *of Castile and the* asistentes *of Seville*

The *asistente* was the royally appointed governor of Seville, responsible for chairing sessions of the city council; but he was also the crown's representative, through whom royal mandates were announced and then enforced. At the same time, he acted as a legal judge in civil and criminal trials. In the other towns and cities of Castile, the equivalent official to the *asistente* was known as the *corregidor*. The difference in nomenclature reflects the specific development of the role in Seville, although functionally the positions were largely the same.

The position of *corregidor* has its political and etymological origins in ancient Rome; from the reign of Trajan 'correctores' (from 'corrigere': to make straight, set right, or bring into order) were occasionally appointed to administer free cities that were not under the jurisdiction of the wider provincial governor.[5] Sebastián de Covarrubias's (1539-1613) *Tesoro de la lengua castellana*, published in the seventeenth century (1611), includes a definition of the *corregidor* in the entry for the verb 'corregir', which provides an impression of how the role as it then stood was understood at a basic level. The *corregidor* was 'el que rige y govierna alguna ciudad, o pueblo', and the 'corregimiento' was his 'cargo', or post – a geographical region with an urban

[5] Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth (eds.), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, 1996), p. 402.

hub from which they worked.[6] *Corregidores* were not just urban governors; they also enforced the royal will over a wider territory, although the extent of their direct involvement outside the city was often limited as they delegated that responsibility to subordinates. Therefore, despite the wider role, there was an urban bias to the post. The role was both judicial and political, demanding an appreciation for jurisprudence alongside a practical awareness of a city's needs, and a cool head during a crisis.

The position becomes visible in Castile's historical record in the reign of Alfonso XI (1311-50), but it was not until the late medieval period and the reigns of firstly Henry IV (1425-74) and then the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand II of Aragon (1452-1516) and Isabella I of Castile (1451-1504), that the role developed from that of a legal, judiciary official to the more politically orientated role understood by Covarrubias, established as a regular component of the administrative machinery of the crown. Marvin Lunenfeld has given the fullest account of the expansion in the *corregidor*'s role, as Isabella worked to 'gain a new measure of authority' throughout all her domains by broadening the scope of an official that came to be the 'enduring link between the municipality and the central government in whose name he ruled'.[7] The imposition of *corregidores* was patchwork and, whilst it was not always top-down (some city councils requested their appointment if they were facing popular unrest), it was frequently resisted by local urban elites.[8] Nevertheless, by the reign of Philip II the position had become entrenched in Castile's political structure, and indeed had been exported to the Crown's colonial territories in America, where, mostly as a result of the large distances involved, *corregidores* were able to accumulate considerable autonomy and enrich themselves at the expense of their *corregimientos*.[9]

The *corregidores* of early modern Castile have not been the subject of a thorough historical monograph in nearly fifty years. Lunenfeld provided a comprehensive overview of how the position was established in the reign of Isabella I of Castile, but for a sustained work that

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[6] Sebastián de Covarrubias Orozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana, o española* (Madrid, 1611), fo. 242v.
[7] Marvin Lunenfeld, *Keepers of the City: The Corregidores of Isabella I of Castile, 1474-1504* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 1.
[8] Fernando Albi, *El Corregidor en el Municipio Español Bajo la Monarquía Absoluta: ensayo histórico crítico* (Madrid, 1943), p. 16.
[9] Lunenfeld, *Keepers of the City*, p.186 and C.E. Castaneda, 'The Corregidor in Spanish Colonial Administration', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 9:4 (1929), pp. 466-7.

analyses the *corregidores* for the entire period in which the official operated we have to go back to 1970 and Benjamín González Alonso's *El corregidor castellano*.[10] González Alonso interpreted the early modern *corregimiento* as a position that reflected the prestige and power of the monarch who appointed its holders. He highlighted that *corregidores* did not exercise power in their own name, but rather in the name of the king they represented, and that as the seventeenth century advanced the appointment of the officials became susceptible to 'la arbitrariedad' and 'corrupción'.[11] González Alonso saw the *corregidores* as reflecting the growth of an 'absolutist' monarchy. *Corregidores*, in his view, 'asumen la realidad más desnuda del poder absoluto de la Monarquía y trasladan sus mecanismos al ámbito municipal'.[12] Indeed, they were 'nacida a la sombra del absolutismo'.[13] In seeing the *corregidores* as blunt agents of royal power (imposed top-down), González Alonso went further than earlier interpreters of the position, such as Fernando Albi. Albi, writing in the 1940s, noticed that regional variations in the powers assigned to *corregidores*, and the fact that they could not override the votes of the *regidores* in the municipal councils they presided over, meant that historians should not overstate their absolutist character.[14] At the same time, however, Albi noted that 'su carácter de representante del Rey le concede un prestigio y una autoridad verdaderamente extraordinario', and that his duties in respect to law and order and his legal authority gave him 'una aureola de extraordinario poder'.[15] Albi provided a more moderate interpretation of the position of *corregidor* within the context of an absolutist monarchy. However, there is no focused study of the position in the light of more recent historiographical doubt over the idea of absolutism. Additionally, González Alonso was keen to emphasise that, whilst possessing a range of duties and responsibilities, the main purpose of the early modern *corregidor* was as a legal officer in their territories. González Alonso argued that the position came to be increasingly legal and judicial in focus, up to the reign of Philip II. This reflected the growth of the *letrado* class – university educated bureaucrats and lawyers.

[10] Benjamín González Alonso, *El corregidor castellano (1348-1808)* (Madrid, 1970).
[11] Alonso, *El corregidor castellano*, pp. 125, 129, and 130.
[12] Ibid., p. 209.
[13] Ibid., p. 12.
[14] Albi, *El Corregidor*, pp. 5-7, 138-9 and 132-3.
[15] Ibid., p. 142.

Accordingly, he stressed the role of the *corregidor* as the 'juez de primera instancia' in his territory.[16] This emphasis has endured, in part because the *residencias* and *visitas*, the investigations into how the *corregidores* had performed in office, frequently focused on the work that the official had done in the courtroom (stemming from the complaints of those unhappy with their treatment).[17] Yet in practice the position demanded an engagement with almost every aspect of quotidian urban government and an appreciation of urban realities.

The most recent interpreter of the position of *corregidor* has been José Ignacio Fortea Pérez, who in a series of articles has focused on specific aspects and the regional contexts of early modern *corregidores*. Fortea Pérez has done much to dismiss the absolutist spell that hung over earlier interpretations of the role, and moved the emphasis away from the judicial and legal to the more political and hands-on aspects of the *corregidores*' duties. Writing about the *corregidores* during what he calls 'la crisis del Reino' (1590-1665), he stresses the problems that *corregidores* faced in the territories and cities they governed due to 'una notable confusión administrativa' as a result of 'una pluralidad de jurisdicciones', a situation that stemmed from a political system that was most concerned with 'conservación', resulting in the gradual accumulation of new duties and responsibilities as needs arose.[18] Looking more specifically at the *corregidores* of Andalusia, Fortea Pérez saw that 'conflictos o tensiones latentes' in the governing of the realm often proved insurmountable obstacles to implementing effective government. For example, the political rights and organisation of certain communities in the towns and cities often left them 'ingobernables', as decisions and actions made by the *corregidor* or indeed the *asistente* became contested and bogged down in jurisdictional conflict.[19] Rather than effective instruments of royal power, therefore, Fortea Pérez presents the *corregidores* as frequently powerless in the face of the

[16] Alonso, *El corregidor castellano*, p. 113, 125 and 200.
[17] For more on the *residencias* of *corregidores* see José Ignacio Fortea Pérez, '"Quid custodit custodes?" Los corregidores de Castilla y sus residencias (1558-1658)', in Angel Rodríguez Sánchez and Bartolomé Bennassar (eds.), *Vivir el siglo de oro: poder, cultura e historia en la época moderna: estudios en homenaje al profesor Ángel Rodríguez Sánchez* (Salamanca, 2003), pp. 179-221. Just under 10% of the *residencias* in this period had a negative result in which the king needed to discipline the official, and the majority of these, 75%, were in the reign of Philip II, demonstrating that monarch's greater severity in assessing his officials.
[18] José Ignacio Fortea Pérez, '"Príncipes de la república." Los corregidores de Castilla y la crisis del Reino (1590-1665)', *Estudis: Revista de Historia Moderna*, 32 (2006), pp. 83, 86 and 109. My thesis will acknowledge the harm caused by jurisdictional conflict to the work of the *asistente* in Chapter 2, pp. 81-91.
[19] José Ignacio Fortea Pérez, 'Entre la toga y la espada: los corregidores andaluces en el siglo XVII (1592-1665)', in *Homenaje a Don Antonio Domínguez Ortiz* (Granada, 2008), vol. 2, pp. 331 and 337.

opposition of local elites and a tangled knot of different institutions and jurisdictions.[20] Many of Fortea Pérez's observations and his overall interpretation will be confirmed and strengthened by this thesis. By shifting the analysis from the legal, political and bureaucratic functions of the official, to the physical, quotidian and urban demands of the role, new light will be shed on the position of *asistente* in action.

Despite the recent advances made by Fortea Pérez in respect to the *corregidores*, and in contrast with the specialist studies published for other cities, the *asistente* of Seville still lacks sustained study.[21] This is a significant gap in the scholarship of early modern Spain. The *corregidores* were the main embodiment of royal government in the towns and cities of Castile. The *asistente* was the most significant of these posts, located in one of the most important cities of the whole monarchy. The *asistentes* had important and unique powers that in theory enabled them to act more effectively according to royal interests, and the men who held the post were major figures in the political landscape of one the most powerful early modern European monarchies.

As indicated by the different title, the position of *asistente* of Seville had a slightly different historical development to that of *corregidor* elsewhere. Only in areas of particularly strong resistance to newly empowered royal agents were alternative titles such as *asistente* used in the late medieval period. These alternative titles allowed the monarchy to make specific changes to their powers, either limiting or strengthening the official to suit the situation, but installing what nonetheless remained essentially a *corregidor* by stealth, as urban communities seem to have been less suspicious of the alternative titles, perhaps because of the flattery it paid to their civic identity. The main alternatives used were 'gobernador' and 'asistente', and the latter title stuck beyond the late medieval period in both Seville and in Burgos, places where royal officials had faced particularly violent opposition in the 1460s especially. One of the first *asistentes* in

[20] Ibid., p. 336.
[21] See, for example, Mauro Hernández, 'La evolución de un delegado regio: corregidores de Madrid en los siglos XVII y XVIII', *Anuario de historia del derecho español*, 61 (1991), pp. 579-606, M.I. Peréz de Colosía, 'Corregidores malagueños durante la segunda mitad del siglo XVII', *Baética: Estudios de arte, geografía e historia*, 18 (1996), pp. 135-48, and, more generally, José Ignacio Fortea Pérez, 'Los corregidores de Castilla bajo los Austrias: Elementos para el estudio prosopográfico de un grupo de poder (1588-1633)', *Studia historica: Historia moderna*, 34 (2012), pp. 99-146.

Seville was nearly stoned to death in 1463, for example, over the introduction of new taxes on foodstuffs.[22] Covarrubias includes the title of *asistente* in his entry for the verb 'asistir', which he defines as 'estar presentes a algun acto'. A more modern definition would carry the meaning of 'to attend', but this sense was also present in the seventeenth century: Covarrubias explains that the *asistente* is the 'Corregidor, o Gobernador, que asisste por el Rey', such as they have in Seville.[23] Implicit in the etymology for the position, as contemporaries understood it, was therefore a closer association with the crown, but also a degree of passivity – rather than active 'correctors', they were 'attendants'. Yet when compared with the increased powers possessed in practice by the *asistente*, the differentiation in nomenclature in Seville reveals the crown's intent: to appease dissenting nobles, whilst giving a boost to the powers of the crown's official in the city.

As with other *corregidores*, it was one of the main responsibilities of the *asistente* to chair the meetings of the city council where all aspects of urban government were discussed and decisions taken (held regularly on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and there could be additional emergency meetings, see pp. 31-5). The *asistente* possessed an important special power in council meetings that *corregidores* elsewhere in Castile lacked, however. Specifically, whilst most *corregidores* could not vote in their councils, and were discouraged from actively participating in discussions and swaying the opinions of voting members, in Seville the *asistente* did possess a vote and was expected to more directly intercede to defend and promote the interests of the monarchy. Not only did he possess a vote, that vote carried a special weighting, being worth a third of all the councilmen then present, plus one. As votes were decided on a simple majority, this was a significant extension of the normal powers of urban governors. Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga (the seventeenth-century historian of the city, see p. 38 above), rightly drew attention to this power as unique, and he also emphasised the extent to which this special power was a sign of the importance placed on Seville by the crown, highlighting the city's close association with the monarchy. For example, the city's motto – 'no me ha dejado' – had been bestowed to Seville in 1283 by Alfonso X as recognition for the city's loyalty to him in his conflict against his second

[22] Lunenfeld, *Keepers of the City*, pp. 17-21.
[23] Covarrubias, *Tesoro*, fo. 98r.

son, Sancho. Ortiz de Zúñiga described the king's supposed words at this time as 'ilustre testimonio de la lealtad de Sevilla'.[24] In the *Annales*, the *asistente*'s powers are taken as further evidence of Seville's primacy and are described almost as a source of pride.

The *asistente* had in fact received these powers in the late fifteenth century in an atmosphere of noble suspicion and mistrust of the imposition of royal agents, and their authority was the source of potential tension even into the seventeenth century.[25] By that time, the *asistente*'s powers had expanded further. In the sixteenth century, the Spanish monarchy reinforced the position: for example, in 1546 the *asistente* received the powers of the *alcalde mayor y veedor de la tierra*, which enhanced his authority and jurisdiction over the land and towns in the territory of Seville.[26] So the seventeenth-century *asistentes* were taking up a post with a comprehensive range of powers and extensive jurisdiction over one of early modern Europe's most important and populous cities.

But what were the ideals and principles of rule – and the wider political culture – that guided their behaviour, or at least provided an ideal to aspire to? There were a number of written guides to expectations on rulers and specifically governors, in the form of conduct books and political treatises. The gap between the ideal described in such texts and the realities of rule are particularly stark when considering events such as disasters and the management of urban space. These texts were important however, actively engaged with during the course of politics, and widely read.

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[24] Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales*, p. 127.
[25] Lunenfeld, *Keepers of the City*, pp. 27-8.
[26] Morales Padrón, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 215.

ii. Jerónimo Castillo de Bobadilla and the roles of corregidor *and* asistente

The *Política para corregidores* is one of the most interesting, and understudied, of early modern Spanish political works. Part conduct manual and part work of political theory, the *Política* was an actively-used text, consulted and cited in legal debates that took place in Castile's cities. I will briefly introduce Jerónimo Castillo de Bobadilla's life and career, before putting his *Política* into three contexts that influenced the text – the articulation of the role of *corregidor* by the Spanish monarchy, the wider background of early modern Spanish political theory, and conduct manuals.

Jerónimo Castillo de Bobadilla's life and career, whilst politically unexceptional, demonstrates the possibilities afforded by a legal training for many aspiring bureaucrats. Born in Medina del Campo in 1547, Bobadilla belonged to the lesser nobility, untitled and not exceptionally wealthy.[27] His route to a career in the crown's service began with a university education: he studied civil and canon law at the University of Salamanca in the 1560s, at the height of the university's prestige.[28] In 1568, after briefly working as a lawyer, he was appointed to the post of *corregidor* of Badajoz, near the border with the territories of the Crown of Portugal (united dynastically with those of Spain in 1580). He worked as *corregidor* in two further *corregimientos*: Soria, in northeastern Castile, from 1574, and then Guadalajara, just northeast of Madrid, from 1578 to 1586. After spending the 1590s working as a bureaucrat at the court itself, in 1602 he became a judge at the royal court of appeal in Valladolid; he died in the late 1610s.[29] This combination of legal training with practical experience in the post meant that Bobadilla had a comprehensive grounding when he came to write the *Política*.

It was probably in the 1590s, in his time at the court, that Bobadilla wrote the *Política para corregidores*, which was published in Madrid in 1597. The licence for the publication of the work was initially withheld and delayed because he had written the work in Spanish, and not in

[27] The most thoroughly-researched account of Bobadilla's life is Francisco Tomás y Valiente, 'Castillo de Bobadilla (c.1547-c.1605). Semblanza personal y profesional de un juez de Antiguo Régimen', *Anuario de historia del derecho español*, 45 (1975), pp. 159-232.
[28] Robert S. Chamberlain, 'The Political thought of Jerónimo Castillo de Bobadilla', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 23:3 (1938), p. 269.
[29] Alonso, *El corregidor castellano*, p. 136.

Latin. There was a desire at court for learning, and subjects like political science and the law in particular, to remain only approachable for the university-educated and those part of a wider European learned culture. Bobadilla, however, emphasised the utility in his work being understood by those *corregidores* who might be appointed despite not having a university education.[30]

There were further complications after its publication, as certain sections in it were identified by the Inquisition as being sufficiently dangerous for it to be included on the Index of banned books, necessitating revisions. These sections mostly had to do with the relationship between secular and religious authorities; as we will see, Bobadilla was quick to defend the authority of governors to stand up to clerical interference.[31] After revision, a second edition was published in Medina del Campo in 1608, and further posthumous editions were published in the first half of the seventeenth century in Barcelona (1616 and 1624) and Madrid (1649). The work's longevity is apparent in eighteenth-century reprints in 1704, 1750, 1759 and 1775. The edition consulted for this research is a copy of the 1616 Barcelona reprint, which includes additions and emendations from the author.[32] Printed in folio, the work comprises five books (libros), divided into chapters (capítulos), spread across two physical volumes (tomos). Despite the cumbersome size and weight of the volumes, their function as practical guides for active use by *corregidores* is apparent from the comprehensive Index placed at the beginning of the first, for quick reference to specific points. There is surprisingly little mention in the front matter of Bobadilla's experience as a *corregidor*, although the frontispiece does draw attention to his work as a judge in the *Chancellería* of Valladolid.

In his statements to the Inquisitorial censor, Bobadilla justifies his work on the grounds that the theme of the *corregidor* had not been extensively worked on by any other scholar and that

[30] Tomás y Valiente, 'Castillo de Bobadilla', pp. 181-3.
[31] Ibid., pp. 183-5. For the banned sections of the 1597 edition of Bobadilla see Antonii Zapata, *Novus Index Librorum et Expurgatorum* (Hispali, 1632), pp. 221-2.
[32] Jerónimo Castillo de Bobadilla, *Política para corregidores y señores de vasallos. En tiempos de Paz, y de guerra. Y para perlados en lo espiritual, y Temporal entre Legos, Iuezes de Comission, Regidores, Abogados, y otros Oficiales publicos: y de las Iurisdiciones, Preeminencias, Residencias, y salarias dellos: y de lo tocante a las de Ordenes y Caballeros dellas* (Barcelona, 1616). My references to the text will normally cite the tomo, libro and capítulo (along with the page number) in the following format: 1.1.1, unless otherwise specified.

the elaboration of certain guiding principles would be useful both to the governors themselves and also to the king in choosing such magistrates.[33] Additionally, he argued, the material on the governors of the Spanish monarchy that did exist 'estan esparzidos y confusos en diversas partes, y no reducidos a metodo, ni tan ampliados, quanto conviene al expediente y variedad de los negocios'.[34] Bobadilla, in pointing out the imprecisions in the definition of the *corregidor*'s (and hence *asistente*'s) function, hits on a problem that will be repeatedly apparent in analysing the work of the *asistentes* in practice, as they struggled to achieve a position of jurisdictional clarity. The main text that described and defined the position of *corregidor* was the *Capítulos de lo que han de guardar los gobernadores, asistentes, corregidores, juezes de residencia y alcaldes de ciudades y villas*, initially issued by the Catholic Monarchs in 1500. These established a range of specific matters for the official to remain on top of, and directives for them to follow; but they were far from being a complete or even thorough codification of what the *corregidores*' duties were overall.[35] They begin by emphasising the concern of *corregidores*, *asistentes*, or *gobernadores* to put into effect and obey all the letters sent by the monarch. In general, meanwhile, governors were to 'guardando nuestro servicio y el bien comun de la tierra' (i.e. the *corregimiento*).[36] Beyond that, the guidance was general and not comprehensive in respect to the practicalities, or the kinds of conflict that might arise. *Corregidores*, governors and *asistentes* were told, for example, to make sure no blasphemies occurred in their territory, to guard its ports, and to make sure any forts and watchtowers were well-maintained.[37]

These *Capítulos* were reissued in 1648. One of the main emphases of the reissue was to further stress the importance of protecting food supply and food reserves, but there were no major changes otherwise.[38] Part of the reason why these stipulations went largely unchanged is likely that, as with the letter reproduced at the start of this chapter from Philip III (p. 40), the monarchy gave individual governors their own instructions as to how to proceed in specific cases and

[33] Bobadilla, *Política*, 'al principe' and 'al letor'.
[34] Ibid., 'proemio', p. 5.
[35] *Capítulos de lo que han de guardar los gobernadores, asistentes, corregidores, juezes de residencia y alcaldes de ciudades y villas* (1500).
[36] Ibid., fo. 1v.
[37] Ibid., fo. 3v and 5r.
[38] The 1648 *Capítulos* can be consulted in González Alonso, *El corregidor castellano*, pp. 318-23.

specific cities.[39] This tendency might be placed into the context of letters of instruction and guidance written by kings and nobles to their princes and sons, advising them on how to carry forward their careers and offices.[40] The early modern world was never short of formats for providing written instruction to those entering engagement in a profession or political office, and Bobadilla's comprehensive contribution to the work of *corregidores* was also a contribution to a growing collection of works that fed off the courtly tradition of conduct manuals, the 'mirror for princes' tradition, and an increasing shift to professionalising politics.

Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (first published in 1528) was the most influential conduct manual in early modern Europe, describing ideals of courtly behaviour through a series of fictional conversations held at the house of the duke of Urbino.[41] The main contemporary Spanish translation of the work, by Juan de Boscán and first published in 1534, was divided up into books and chapters which provided an endorsed reading by giving simplified chapter headings, offering a seemingly definitive conclusion on the contents.[42] These headings lessened the ambiguity of the original and showed the increasing trend towards maxims and aphorisms in early modern Spanish thought.[43] Bobadilla's work, divided up into chapters with summaries, and with a comprehensive index of subject matter, clearly shows the influence of such texts. The mirror for princes tradition was similarly influential. Texts such as Erasmus' *Institutio principis Christiani* (1516, written for Charles V) and Juan de Mariana's *De rege et regis institutione* (1598) fell into this tradition, which in the sixteenth century moved towards also providing instruction for political figures below the level of the prince.[44] Fadrique Furió Ceriol indicated

[39] See also Carmen Losa Contreras, 'Un manuscrito inédito de los Capítulos de Corregidores enviado al Concejo de Murcia', *Cuadernos de Historia del Derecho*, 10 (2003), pp. 238-9.
[40] For example, the instructions of Charles V left to his son Philip II in 1543. See Rachael Ball and Geoffrey Parker (eds.), *Cómo ser rey: instrucciones del emperador Carlos V a su hijo Felipe* (New York, 2014).
[41] For Castiglione's influence see Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's Cortegiano* (Cambridge, 1995).
[42]Baldesar Castiglione (tr. Juan de Boscán), *El Cortesano: traduzido por Boscán en nuestro vulgar Castellano, nuevamente agora corregido* (Anvers, 1574), fo. 1r. The most popular English translation, by Thomas Hoby, had no such divisions.
[43] See José Antonio Maravall (tr. Terry Cochran), *Culture of the Baroque: Analysis of a Historical Structure* (Manchester, 1983), p. 210, for this trend in the seventeenth century. A good example is Baltasar Alamos de Barrientos, *Tacito español, ilustrado con aforismos* (Madrid, 1614), which appended a series of aphorisms from Tacitus's works, translated into Spanish.
[44] Desiderius Erasmus, *Institutio principis Christiani* (Basel, 1516) and Juan de Mariana, *De rege et regis institutione* (Toledo, 1598). A useful guide for the Spanish tradition in this respect is Ronald Truman,

towards this shift in *El Concejo, i Consejereos del Principe* (1559), which, while describing the work of the prince as a 'profesion', mainly advised the king on how to select and handle his councillors and advisers.[45] This tendency was taken forward by writers such as Joan Costa and Juan de Castilla y de Aguayo, who in 1575 and 1586 respectively published treatises which functioned as advice-books for *regidores* (the councilmen of Spain's city councils).[46] Bobadilla, in publishing a text to clarify the role of the *corregidor*, was contributing to this growing professionalising of politics.[47] These works became increasingly specialised – a 1613 text, for example, provided instruction for secretaries and scribes, whilst one of 1620 used Castiglione's format of a dialogue to do the same for ambassadors of the king.[48] These works, including Bobadilla, were also contributing to a wider early modern Spanish literature concerned with political theory and the role of the king. Bobadilla's approach brought him close, at times, to so-called 'constitutionalist' thinkers, and the idea that the king exercised his authority on behalf of the community of the governed. Without denying monarchy as the best form of government, some early modern Spanish texts could provide justification for circumstances in which to oppose (even to the point of regicide) the monarch's authority.[49] Bobadilla, whilst addressing what he saw as a gap in the understanding of the *corregidor*'s role, was also adding to pre-existing literary genres.

The *Política para corregidores*, across its two volumes and over fifteen hundred pages, was a comprehensive and wide-ranging text that covered all of the approaches outlined above. Bobadilla starts from deciding on broad points of principle and considers the political theories of

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Spanish Treatises on Government, Society and Religion in the time of Philip II. The 'de regimine principum' and Associated Traditions (Leiden, 1999).

[45] Fadrique Furió Ceriol, *El Concejo, i Consejeros* (Anvers, 1559), 'Prologo'.

[46] Juan Costa, *El ciudadano* (Pamplona, 1575) and Juan de Castilla y de Aguayo, *El perfecto regidor* (Salamanca, 1586). A 'ciudadano' was an Aragonese *regidor*. See Truman, *Spanish Treatises on Government*, p. 123.

[47] For the professionalisation of politics, and elites more generally, see Hilde de Ridder Symoens, 'Training and Professionalization', in Wolfgang Reinhard (ed.), *Power Elites and State Building* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 149-72.

[48] Gabriel Pérez del Barrio Angulo, *Dirreción de secretarios y señores, y las materias, cuidados y obligaciones que les tocan* (Madrid, 1613) and Juan Antonio de Vera y Figueroa, *El Enbaxador* (Seville, 1620). Angulo's text is particularly informative of the connection between letters of advice to princes and nobles and advice-books, as it attaches a letter from a nobleman to his son on the occasion of the latter being sent to court as an appendix.

[49] Francisco Suárez (a Jesuit thinker) was one such individual. See Annabel Brett, 'Political Thought', in Hamish Scott (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750. Volume II: Cultures and Power* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 39-41.

the ancient philosophers. In the first chapter of the first book, he compares the imagined republics of Plato and Aristotle, and in doing so concludes that 'la gobernacion de uno es mas excelente que las otras', as monarchies had endured from the earliest times and produced some of the most stable and successful states.[50] Bobadilla does not even take the need for government for granted, although he insists that only poets considered it possible that man could live in his natural state without the need for laws to govern them. Cities were the logical product of mankind's tendency to form communities, yet encouraged the development of legal systems to deal with the disorder caused by this massing of humanity.[51] He provides a definition, adapted from Aristotle, of what comprises a city, namely 'una perfecta congregacion de muchas aldeas, o muchedumbre de ciudadanos, a quien no falta nada de lo necesario para la vida'. A republic (which he used as an umbrella term for any sovereign political unit, including monarchies) meanwhile was, again following Aristotle, a grouping of citizens or of those who governed cities. Bobadilla states that it appeared to him that a republic could be 'un justo gobierno de muchas familias, y de lo comun a ellas, con superior autoridad'.[52] Cities were right at the heart of what Bobadilla and contemporaries considered to be a political community, and were the core units of government for any republic. Indeed, his entire definition of 'Política' is 'buena gobernacion de ciudad', including ordering all the things that pertained to 'la policia, conservacion, y buen encaminamiento de los hombres'.[53] Bobadilla framed the position of *corregidor*, and thus *asistente*, as a paternalistic role which took on the monarchy's responsibility to care for and protect his subjects.

The emphasis on the *corregidor* acting as a protective father in his *corregimiento* was reinforced by the repeated comparison of politics to the family, and the association of the family structure as being an ideal framework for understanding political authority and responsibility. 'La familia bien regida', Bobadilla asserted, 'es el verdadera imagen de la República'. At the same time 'la casa es una pequeña ciudad, y la ciudad es una casa grande'. The urban sphere was

[50] Bobadilla, *Política*, 1.1.1, p. 12. For example, Bobadilla considered the Roman Empire since the time of Caesar Augustus to be a 'monarchy'.
[51] Ibid., pp. 9-10.
[52] Ibid., p. 17. The centrality of family-led oligarchies can be seen in the work of James Casey, for example his *Family and Community in Early Modern Spain: The citizens of Granada, 1570-1739* (Cambridge, 2007).
[53] Bobadilla, *Política*, 1.1.1, p. 16.

connected to the domestic sphere and Bobadilla asserts that in respect to how they should be governed the spheres 'solo difieren en la grandeza'.[54] The connection of good family life to good civic life was restated at the start of the seventeenth century by Martín González de Cellorigo who argued that a magistrate in his family life must set an example for the rest of the city.[55] The comparison is sustained throughout the *Política*. In the first chapter of the second book, describing 'Qual debe ser el principal intento del buen Corregidor', the *corregidor* is told to be motivated by the 'bien publico', and act 'como padre del pueblo'.[56] Bobadilla's perspective was that the same held true for the king and the kingdom. Just as scale alone differentiated the rule of a house and a city, all that distinguished governing the city from governing a kingdom was that the latter 'se ocupan mas personas'.[57] The role of the *corregidor* (and thus also the *asistente*) was therefore associated with that of the king. In the second chapter of the first book, where Bobadilla provides his introduction to the *corregidor*'s role and its history, he sums up by describing the *corregidores*' mandate as 'el mayor despues del Principe' as they dealt with 'los negocios conteñciosos' in the cities and executed 'los actos de buen gobernacion'.[58] *Corregidores* and *asistentes* were therefore not simply royal appointees, but had the same overarching function as the monarch himself: to rule, and to protect the ruled.

This understanding of the *corregidor*'s role had an impact on how Bobadilla directed these men to interact with other sources of authority, including the king himself. For example, in respect to the relationship between the centre and the periphery, the obedience *corregidores* owed to the king could sometimes clash with their broad obligation to rule and to the 'bien publico' of their *corregimiento*. Bobadilla is explicit that the governor had to be directed, at least in part, by the opinions of his territory. For example, in acting as a judge, 'la opinion comun' had to be the guide.[59] The *corregidor* should not be too 'singular' in decision-making, but instead should both proactively consult with wise advisers in the *corregimiento* and try to act according to local mood

[54] Ibid.
[55] See Casey, *Family and Community*, p. 1.
[56] Bobadilla, *Política*, 1.2.1, p. 292 and 294.
[57] Ibid., 1.1.1, p. 16.
[58] Ibid., 1.1.2, p. 25.
[59] Ibid., 1.2.7, p. 390.

and opinion. This recommendation mirrored a responsibility of the king's, to consult with the wise men of his kingdom.[60] Simultaneously the *corregidor* had to put into effect royal mandates and obey orders from the king 'con toda reverencia'.[61] There were conditions under which, however, a king's orders might be refused, such as if they ran counter to Natural Law or the Catholic faith.[62] Bobadilla also gives wholly political reasons for not obeying a royal order: if the king ordered something against well-known laws of the realm or territorial rights (*fueros*), the *corregidor* could refuse to carry it out, and the same applied for cases where the king ordered a judicial killing out of anger or 'pasion'.[63] The first of these political justifications for refusing to obey an order of the king provides an avenue for the territory to assert itself on the actions of the *corregidor*. In practice, depending on the monarch for their careers, *corregidores* had little reason to favour their *corregimiento* out of principle. But the positioning of *corregidores* in the middle of centre/periphery relations was one of the main challenges they faced. There is a tension in the text, as although Bobadilla cited defending the Catholic faith as a reason to disobey the monarch, he also emphasised that justice should be secular. Royal jurisdiction was to be safeguarded wherever possible, and forcefully asserted even in the face of fierce resistance. For example, ecclesiastical immunity and the right to be tried by ecclesiastical justice rather than secular (granted to members of military orders and students, for example) was to be challenged in serious and delicate cases, where the matter seemed to be particularly complicated, with *corregidores* encouraged to refer such cases on to the royal courts of appeal.[64] This assertion in the book survived inquisitorial correction, and as we shall see in Chapter 5 (pp. 231-8), these delicate matters could include issues which had a real physical impact on the city, its environment, and its residents.

Having outlined the influences on Bobadilla and given an overview of his approach to the *corregidor*, it remains to be asked, 'so what'? Whilst I will argue later that the concern of the

[60] Ibid., p. 394. The same responsibility had been emphasised by Ceriol in his *El Concejo, i Consejeros del Principe*, 'Prologo'.
[61] Bobadilla, *Política*, 1.2.10, p. 436.
[62] Bobadilla doesn't define precisely what he means by Natural Law, but gives the example of if the king orders the *corregidor* to kill himself as an order that it would be justifiable to disobey on such grounds. Ibid., pp. 439-41.
[63] Ibid., pp. 440-1.
[64] Ibid, 1.2.19, pp. 865 and 869.

asistente to be seen to act as a protector to the city during floods fits the paternalistic conceptualisation of the role of *corregidor*, it is also the case that Bobadilla's text was actively used in the carrying out of the law and politics right until the end of my period and in more routine circumstances. For example, in a 1667 dispute between the *asistente* Baltasar de Eraso y Toledo, the count of Humanes (1623-87), and one of his *tenientes*. Complaining about the use of the title 'mayor' by the other *teniente*, the complainant, one Thomas de Oña, a trained lawyer, repeatedly cited Bobadilla to make his case. His grievance was that the other *teniente* (Humanes had appointed two) had begun using the addition 'mayor' in front of his title, attempting to manufacture a senior rank from an equal brief and in so doing displaying a harmful level of ambition.[65] Bobadilla, de Oña pointed out, had confirmed that *corregidores* were entitled to appoint their own *tenientes*, but were not empowered to distinguish them in seniority or rank, and the *Política* was also cited for its assertion that if two of the same offices were created in the same space (specifically referring to *corregidores* and *corregimientos*), they would be equal in jurisdiction.[66] The *Política* was a text that those carrying out the office of *asistente*, or helping to carry out that office, were demonstrably familiar with, and used actively when performing their roles. We know that Pedro Núñez de Guzmán, the marquis of Montealegre and *asistente* 1653-62, had a copy of Bobadilla's work in his extensive collection.[67] Although Montealegre was exceptional in the extent of his book ownership, it does not seem far-fetched that many other *asistentes* would have owned this work.

Alongside jurisdictional arguments, Bobadilla was also referenced in cases that touched on practical and even environmental matters, right up to the end of the reign of Charles II. In 1694, for example, in an argument concerning the taxation of the sale of ice in the city, the *asistente* Juan de Valenzuela Venegas, the count of Valdeaguila, tried to prevent the imposition of the royal

[65] *Memorial Juridico, que en defensa del igual decente tratamiento que indistintamente se debe a los principales Tenencias de la Assistencia desta Ciudad, pone en manos del Señor Conde de Humanes*, AMS XI (f.).37.23, fo. 258v and 259r.
[66] Ibid., fo. 264r (referencing Bobadilla, *Política*, 1.1.12 and 1.1.16) and fo. 269r (*Política*, 1.1.12).
[67] José Maldonado y Pardo, *Museo o biblioteca selecta de el excmo. Señor don Pedro Nuñez de Guzman, marques de Montealegre* (Madrid, 1677), fo. 10r. Bobadilla's *Política* was included in this catalogue as a work of 'jurisprudence' rather than as a political treatise, which further suggests its active use.

tax by the king's special tax collector.[68] Part of the city's argument was that they possessed the ice as a privilege which the royal agent did not have the authority to circumvent. In the event, the royal judge of the *Real Audiencia* (Seville's royal court of appeal, see p. 82) ruled in favour of the royal tax collector, as the city had only recently gained control of the ice wells at Constantina, on which they based their claim. Bobadilla was invoked to show that the city's councilmen could not make a profit on the possessions of the city without some demonstrable benefit to the monarch.[69] Environmental and social issues were invoked in tandem with Bobadilla's text. The city's previous immunity to a tax on the sale of ice was that because the city was so hot and so populous, the ice was needed as a medical good, and it needed to be kept at a low price. A sales tax would push prices up, which in turn would impact the poor worst of all.[70] The *Política para corregidores* was used to contest matters of real, quotidian importance in Seville.

A final point on the use of the *Política* in such cases is that it confirms that in practice, and in the understanding of the post by those holding it, there was no great difference in the roles of *corregidor* and *asistente*. The differences were instead of degree – the scale and importance of the city, as reflected in a few specific differences (of which the most important was the voting power of the *asistente*, as described above) – and, as we will see, in the men selected. The *Ordenanzas* of the city explained that when the official was initially appointed by Ferdinand and Isabella 'fue por mejor saber, como y en que manera los oficiales y ministros de la justicia, la administrauan en la dicha ciudad y su tierra, y administrasse lo que no estuviesse bien fecho'.[71] Facing a barrage of petitions, orders, expectations, demands, calls for help, and legal cases, the *asistente* would have to deal with individuals of all types. How they communicated would have to convey their authority and prudence. Ruling was a communicative act. Bobadilla makes this point colourfully, in a list of stock characters from municipal life:

> El Corregidor ha de tratar con el Regidor tirano, y con el aldeano inorante, con el rico mandon, y con la abazera bozinglera, con el clerigo facinoroso, y con el

[68] *Competencia entre el Sr. Conde de Valdeáguila, Asistente y Juez del desempeño de esta Ciudad, con el Juez en comision D. Antonio de Castillo y Rueda. sobre hacer pagar el derecho de los quintos de la nieve y yelos fecha 3 de Agosto de 1684*, AMS XIII.1.27.
[69] Ibid., fo. 219v (citing Bobadilla, *Política*, 2.3.8).
[70] Ibid., fo. 211r.
[71] *Ordenanzas de Sevilla*, fo. 11r.

> ciudadano de buen zelo, con la biuda honesta, y con el rufian atreuido, con el vsurero cauteloso, y con el hijo de vecino incorregible, con la muger dissoluta, y con el escriua no desalmado, con el holgazan insolente, y con el frayle recogido, con el hidalgo puntoso, y con el abogado disimulado, y con otras mil gentes de varias calidades, humores, y condiciones: y necessariamente ha de hablar con ellos con diuerso termino, y lenguage, tratando a cada uno con el decoro que el negocio, y su oficio requiren: y en fin le es forçoso, hablando, o obrando, dar muestra y señal publica de su prudencia, de su autoridad, de su valor, de su modestia, de su rectitud, de sus letras, y de sus virtudes, o de los contrarios de todo esto...[72]

Being a *corregidor* or *asistente* was not some bureaucratic exercise in pen-pushing, but thrust Spanish statesmen into the urban environment and all its attendant sights, sounds, tastes, and smells. Who were the men who took up this difficult and multi-faceted position?

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iii. The asistentes *of Seville, 1621-1700*

Due to the environmental focus I am taking on the city and its governing, I have not performed an exhaustive prosopography of the *asistentes* for this period. However, I do want to conclude this chapter by making a few initial observations and drawing attention to some of the more noteworthy *asistentes* who had an impact on the wider monarchy, and highlight some of the names that will recur in my analysis.

Thirty-one different men held the position of *asistente* from 1621 to 1700. I have provided a full list of the twenty-four individuals appointed by the king (following the suggestions and advice of the *Real Cámara de Castilla*) in Appendix 1, p. 255. There were a further seven men who held the post in interim, always the *regente* of the *Real Audiencia* (the chief officer of the city's royal court of appeal, a situation which could lead to tension, as the next chapter will demonstrate). The typical tenure of those specifically appointed for the position was two or three years, although there were outliers. Pedro Núñez de Guzman, for example, appointed to the city in 1653 in an hour of real need after the instability of revolt in 1652, was in office for nearly ten

[72] Bobadilla, *Política*, 1.1.3, p. 63.

years until late 1662 (by far the longest-serving *asistente* of the period). The connection to the city he built up over these years was reflected in the letter he sent to the city council upon his return to Madrid, notifying them of his safe arrival and saying that he would be at their disposal in the future, offering his services as a friendly ear at court.[73] Some *asistentes* developed a real affinity with the city. This was not only expressed in letters pledging service such as that from de Guzmán, but also in other ways, such as religious patronage. During the plague of 1649, for example, *asistente* Diego de Cárdenas made a point of arranging a procession for his favoured image of the Virgin Mary – Nuestra Señora de la Iniesta in the Church of St Julian – as 'a su señoria parecio seria bien a tan grandes mercedes receuidas hazer cortas demostraciones' to that holy image. This piety won him acclaim for his 'gran devocion' in a surviving manuscript account of the plague.[74] Others, as we will see, went to Seville only reluctantly.

None of those selected for the post were natives of the city itself, as *corregidores* and *asistentes* could not be from the same city as they were going to govern (to avoid corruption). They came instead from a variety of the other territories and cities of the monarchy. There is no pattern as to where the *asistentes* came from – some were from cities in the Castilian heartland, such as Valladolid, others from families with origins in more peripheral territories such as Galicia.[75] Some had families that were initially from other kingdoms but then moved to Castile: Baltasar de Eraso's (*asistente* 1666-9) family were initially from Navarre but then relocated to Madrid.[76] As a group, the *asistentes* of this period were overwhelmingly from the titled nobility. The extent to which the *asistente* was a noble post is in contrast with *corregidores* elsewhere, and reflected the city's status as the grandest and most prestigious post in Castile.[77] Some were from families that had only recently been admitted into these ranks, and some received newly created

[73] *Carta del Conde de Villaumbrosa á la Ciudad, desde Madrid en 19 de Diciembre de 1662*, AMS IV.16.48.
[74] 'Relación del contagio que padeció esta ciudad (1649)', *Memorias de diferentes cosas sucedidas en esta muy noble y mui leal ciudad de Sevilla* (1696), BCC 59-1-05, fo. 92r.
[75] Alberto Garcia Carrafa and Arturo Garcia Carrafa, *Enciclopedia Heráldica y Genealógica Hispano-Americana*, 88 vols. (Madrid, 1919-63), vol. 42, p. 160, 168 and 125.
[76] Ibid., vol. 31, p. 103.
[77] 16 out of the 24 selected by the king were from the upper nobility. This marked an intensification of a previous trend. See Pérez, 'Entre la toga y la espada', p. 326, for a view from the end of the reign of Philip II until the beginning of that of Charles II. He contrasts the nobilisation of Seville's *asistente* with *corregidores* in Granada and Jaen.

titles after holding the post. Luis de Salcedo y Arbizu, for example, received the title of count of Gómara in 1690 from Charles II, having been *asistente* 1683-5.[78] Others were from families of long noble pedigree and prestige, and acquired yet further titles. Diego de Cardenas (*asistente* 1642 and 1649-51 – his holding the post twice will be explained in the next chapter) was the tenth count of Puebla del Maestre, the first marquis of Bacares and the third marquis of Auñón, and married the ninth countess of Nieva.[79] In addition, most had membership of one or other of the knightly orders, which were prized for the outward demonstration they gave of nobility and purity of lineage.[80] If we look at extant images and portraits of the *asistentes* from this period, the iconography of military orders is prevalent. For example, there is a prominent cross of the Order of Santiago in a portrait of García Sarmiento de Sotomayor from his time as viceroy of Mexico (*asistente* 1634-42, then Viceroy of Mexico and then Peru: see Figure 1, p. 67).

Although I will further elaborate on the careers of *asistentes* before they took up the post in the next chapter, these men tended to serve important and influential posts, both at court as part of the king's *consejos* and as part of the imperial machinery of the monarchy in the Americas. Twelve of the thirty-one *asistentes* from this period were members of the *Consejo de Castilla*, usually appointed to that council after serving as *asistente*, but sometimes before.[81] Pedro Núñez de Guzmán was even president of that council 1669-77, and considering his letter to the city offering them his services, it seems clear that during these years the city would have had powerful allies at court. Guzmán was also in the *Real Cámara*, dealing with the selection of *asistentes* for the city, and it does seem as if he was working so that extra care was taken with the city's management.[82] Other *asistentes* also had more senior postings within the *consejos*. Carlos Ramírez de Arellano (*asistente* 1673-8) and Manuel de Arce y Astete (who held the post of

[78] Pelayo Artigas, *Los Salcedos y Ríos: progenitores de los Condes de Gómara* (Madrid, 1920), pp. 14-5.
[79] *Enciclopedia Heráldica y Genealógica*, vol. 23, pp. 128-9.
[80] Juan Cartaya Baños, '"Que no concurran las calidades de limpeiza": Algunos expedientes sevillanos para las órdenes militares', *Tiempos Modernos*, 23 (2011/12), p. 24.
[81] For these men, the indispensable resource is Janine Fayard, *Les Membres du Conseil de Castille a l'Époque Moderne (1621-1746)* (Geneva, 1979).
[82] See the next chapter for analysis of the work of the *Real Cámara*. In AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 39, when Guzmán was present, the *Cámara* wrote to the king urging a speedy response to the vacancy in the post of *asistente* after the death of the count of Molina in July 1664, as the city needed a firm hand to rule it. See below, p. 72.

asistente on an interim basis in 1687) were both presidents of the *Consejo de Hacienda*, for example.[83] Others had worked in Seville before, acting as a member of the *Consejo de Indias* or president of the *Casa de Contratación*, before becoming *asistente*. Again, Pedro Núñez de Guzmán was one such individual (Guzmán stands out as being particularly involved in Seville's mid-century in a number of capacities), along with Joseph Pardo de Figueroa (*asistente* in 1665, he died suddenly in office).[84] It is clear then that the post of *asistente* was one taken up by men who were significant political actors in the reigns of Philip IV and Charles II. Fortea Pérez has explicitly referred to this tendency, pointing out that the position 'servía de trampolín para más altos destinos'. One such post was that of being a viceroy in either Mexico or Peru, which were, Fortea Pérez claims, 'destinos más o menos normales' for an *asistente* to move on to.[85] In actuality, this observation became less true across 1621-65, with only one *asistente* going to the New World in this capacity: García Sarmiento de Sotomayor, whose portrait I have already mentioned, viceroy of Mexico 1642-8 and of Peru 1648-55.[86] As viceroy of Mexico, Sotomayor became embroiled in a bitter struggle with Juan de Palafox y Mendoza (1600-59), one of the most notable individuals in the history of colonial Mexico.[87] Their conflict, as Sotomayor worked assertively to advance the power of the viceroy as the imperial embodiment of the king, and Sotomayor's work more generally, is interesting as it reveals the political perspectives that *asistentes* might have. Sotomayor wanted to increase the extent of royal control in Mexico at the expense of the regional rights which Palafox defended, and he was also aware of the practicalities and compromises that government could demand. In 1648 he wrote to Philip IV that a certain amount of corruption in the government of Mexico was inevitable if the monarchy's objectives were to be reached. In coming out on top in his dispute with Palafox, Sotomayor demonstrated his

[83] Fayard, *Membres du Conseil de Castille*, p. 135.
[84] Ibid., p. 154. Figueroa's funeral took place in Seville itself, and because of the multiple institutions he had worked for in the city, the organisations became complex and contested, as the different bodies jostled for prominence. 'Muerte en Sevilla de don Joseph Pardo de Figueroa, del Consejo de su Magestad, en el Real de Castilla, asistente de dicha ciudad,' *Memorias de diferentes cosas sucedidas en esta muy noble y mui leal ciudad de Sevilla* (1696), BCC 59-1-05, fo. 49r. I analyse another *asistente*'s funeral in Chapter 3, pp. 126-30.
[85] Fortea Pérez, 'Entre la toga y la espada', p. 330.
[86] Teodoro Hampe Martínez, 'Esbozo de una transferencia política: asistentes de Sevilla en el gobierno virreinal de México y Perú', *Historia mexicana*, 41:1 (1991), p. 64.
[87] For this conflict see Cayetana Álvarez de Toledo, *Politics and Reform in Spain and Viceregal Mexico: The Life and Thought of Juan de Palafox 1600-1659* (Oxford, 2004).

adeptness at using patronage and gift-giving as tools of politics, skills that he may well have honed in Seville.[88]

It is vital, however, to remember that the *asistentes* of Seville were men as well as politicians. Part of my concern in focusing on the intersection between politics and the environment is to humanise processes and structures that can otherwise be viewed dispassionately. I will conclude this chapter by drawing attention to the autobiographical sketches written by Félix Nieto de Silva (1635-91, and *asistente* 1685-7), which provide an insight into some of his personal idiosyncrasies whilst also highlighting themes that will be returned to later. Silva produced the manuscript in 1690, but it was published in 1888 in a printed edition by the Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles.[89] The introduction to this edition emphasises that the reflections are not as self-serving as might be expected from the autobiographical material of a grandee of the Spanish monarchy, which is explained by Silva's motivation for writing. He was giving thanks to the Virgin of Peña de Francia, a Marian shrine near Salamanca, which he believed had provided him with protection and support throughout his life.[90] Silva was not entirely unusual among *asistentes* in being possessed of high levels of personal piety. As I have mentioned above, Diego de Cárdenas led processions personally to his favoured Marian chapel in Seville during plague, whilst Lorenzo de Santos de San Pedro (interim *asistente* 1664-5) possessed a letter from Saint Teresa de Avila, which he considered a holy relic.[91] Silva frames his entire life around the protection he received from the Virgin. His first memory was of accidentally swallowing a pin whilst being picked up by a chaplain as his parents enjoyed their siesta, when he was four or five years old and growing up in Ciudad Rodrigo. The pin, however, left his body after a couple of days without causing a scratch, which he considered a miracle.[92]

Aside from this religious aspect, much of the text is given over to descriptions of military campaigns. Silva's life took him to Salamanca as a student, before becoming a cavalry commander fighting in the Portuguese Restoration War. He then held posts as governor in Cádiz

[88] Álvarez de Toledo, *Politics and Reform*, pp. 164-6, 174 and 206.
[89] Félix Nieto de Silva, *Memorias de D. Félix Nieto de Silva* (Madrid, 1888).
[90] A. Cánovas del Castillo, introduction to *Memorias de D. Félix Nieto de Silva*, p. viii.
[91] Fayard, *Membres du Conseil de Castille*, p. 364.
[92] Silva, *Memorias*, p. 3.

and then the Canary Islands, before being appointed *asistente* in late 1685. During his time governing the Canary Islands, a failure of the crops due to low rainfall in 1680 caused widespread bread shortage, a reminder of how environmental matters impacted on government. The eventual relief of the situation was chalked up to the intervention of the Virgin;[93] the interpretation of environmental events through a religious perspective will be observed again in Chapter 5, most of all in respect to Seville's flooding. His appointment as *asistente* was, as Silva describes it, something of a surprise, and he took on the role only out of a desire to serve the king, rather than it being a post he wanted. The previous *asistente*, Luis de Salcedo y Arbizu, had asked to be replaced due to ill-health, and had endured a testing time in the position as drought and then flood hit the city (see pp. 239-47).[94] Silva took over the city when it was at perhaps its lowest ebb in the century (as described at the start of my introduction), yet still remained aware of the city's grandeur. Silva describes how he had just returned to Malaga from the Canary Islands when he received a note from the presidents of both the *Consejos de Castilla* and *Hacienda* that the king needed him to take up the post of *asistente* and go to the city 'sin perder hora de tiempo'.[95] Silva was initially very reluctant to take up the post, laughing ruefully in a conversation with the archbishop of Malaga (Alonso Henríquez de Santo Tomás, 1631-92) that it was a post he had tried to avoid all his life. He was also surprised, thinking at first that the city must be under siege for Charles II to want to appoint him, given his mostly military background. The archbishop responded that God had provided Silva with great talents and Silva in turn reflected on the state of Seville (in loss and waste), the trust the king had placed in him by putting 'aquel pueblo tan grande' in his hands, and giving Silva the chance to orchestrate affairs there. He was moved to change his mind:

> ponderándome lo perdida que estaba Sevilla, y el gran aprecio que debía hacer de que el Rey echase mano de mi para poner aquel pueblo tan grande en algún régimen, y otras cosas, que á fuer de buen vasallo, me obligó la persuasión del Sr. Obispo á ejecutar lo que no pensaba.[96]

[93] Ibid., pp. 171-3.
[94] Consulta of the *Real Cámara*, 13 October 1685, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 53.
[95] Silva, *Memorias*, pp. 183-4.
[96] Ibid., p. 184.

Accepting the post, Silva noted how soldiers were 'hijos de la obediencia', and it is clear that a large part of his thinking on taking up a post he didn't really want was the loyalty and service that he owed the king.

His account of his time as *asistente* takes up only one paragraph. He believed that 'quedó Su Majestad bien servido', because 'aquellos caballaeros son muy cortesanos y atentos', and he gave thanks to 'nuestra señora' (the Virgin of Peña de Francia) for the good fortune he had enjoyed in his time there. He stated that he would not provide further specifics as it was outside the purpose of his writing.[97] Instead, he focuses on his efforts to be appointed as the governor of Orán only a year into his time as *asistente*, and his eagerness to receive this post is clear. Eventually moving to Orán after initially being overlooked, Silva again attributed the course of events to his divine protector.[98] His lack of enthusiasm for being *asistente* at this time might suggest the decline of the city, and certainly the challenges posed by the office. Despite the lack of detail provided about his time in office in Silva's account, it is clear that *asistentes* could have a deeply ambiguous perspective on their job in the city. Even earlier in the period, men could be reluctant to hold the office. Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, who will feature prominently in Chapter 4 for his efforts to initiate the construction of a stone bridge in the city (pp. 171-88), wrote to the king in 1628 explaining that he had six children and dwindling finances, and that the city's affairs were so neglected that his costs and obligations would be increased, implying that it would be better if he could serve Philip IV in some other capacity.[99] His request fell on deaf ears and he began his new role in 1629.

Mendoza's reference to his family is another reminder of the humanity of the *asistentes*, and the domestic and emotional lives running parallel to their political careers. Silva's autobiographical writings reveal moments and anecdotes that demonstrate the fear and hope he felt at various moments. Travelling from Cádiz to Tenerife in 1680, Silva describes a night of 'gran trabajo y horror', as a storm threatened their vessel when he and his pregnant wife were on

[97] Ibid., p. 185.
[98] Ibid., pp. 185-7.
[99] Antonio Rodríguez Villa, *Noticia biográfica y documentos históricos relativos a Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza* (Madrid, 1873), pp. xxxix-xli.

board.[100] A more tragic event had occurred five years before in 1675, when plague in Salamanca killed his daughter Maria. He referred to this time as 'uno de los mayores trabajos que he tenido en mi vida' and he was prompted to reflect on the impossibility of understanding God's justice.[101]

Throughout this thesis, my tone will often be critical about how Seville was governed, particularly in respect to the environment and disaster. Yet very often the men overseeing neglect and failure were striving to achieve what they could in difficult circumstances. They were not blameless in the history of the city's decline – willing participants in a monarchy that prioritised its own needs over the basic requirements of its subjects – but they must at least remain individuals whose humanity is acknowledged and respected.

[100] Silva, *Memorias*, p. 167.
[101] Ibid., pp. 157-8.



Figure 1: Anonymous, *García Sarmiento de Sotomayor, Virrey de la Nueva España* (1642).

2. 'El Pueblo que mas necesita de gobierno y caueça': The *asistente* in royal policy and attempted reform under Philip IV

The *asistente* of Seville was first and foremost a royal agent, acting in the king's interest in the city and speaking with his voice. Royal policy as it concerned the *asistente* suggests how Kings Philip IV, Charles II and their chief advisers wanted their power to operate in the city. The *asistente* in practice was far from a blunt instrument of 'absolutism', but the monarchy tried to ensure that men appointed to the position were of proven loyalty to the crown. Once *asistentes* had taken up their post, however, the presence of other royally-appointed institutions and officials, most particularly the *Real Audiencia*, confused jurisdictional boundaries and led to political instability in the city, frequently requiring the monarchy's intervention. These issues, alongside specific political crises, led to plans to completely restructure royal power in the city. The plans, never implemented, would have significantly changed the *asistente*'s role and the dynamic of their relationship with the city. Their failure demonstrates both a wider political attitude of suspicion to 'novedad' and that the monarchy was unable to force through changes that the city elite (as represented in the city council) did not like. Despite the city's mid-century crisis and the persistence of jurisdictional uncertainty, the political structures and processes concerning the *asistente* stayed largely the same, and the *asistente* remained an important position for the political elite of Spain.

This chapter contains an analysis of the royal bureaucracy and decision making as it related to the *asistente*. I discuss the processes of selection and appointment for *asistentes*, which cast new light on the relationship between crown and city – re-emphasising how political decisions at the centre could exacerbate local problems. The chapter concludes by examining the proposed but ultimately unimplemented reforms of the position during the reign of Philip IV. By placing urban environmental challenges such as flooding alongside a more traditional history of politics and government, I hope to suggest how the two can be studied in conjunction.

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i. How asistentes *were chosen and appointed in the seventeenth century*

During the seventeenth century, the process by which *asistentes* were appointed remained largely unchanged. It reflected, at all stages, a prioritisation of the monarchy's interests above appointing the best man for the city. The appointment process could prompt moments of negotiation between city and court, but these rarely concluded in the former's favour. The king always made the final decision on who was appointed. To arrive at a decision, however, the king considered the advice of the *Real Cámara de Castilla*, the royal council created in the late-medieval period but formalised by Philip II in 1588 specifically to handle patronage and office-holding.[1] They suggested men to the king for the various political offices across Castile. The *Cámara* consisted of a handful of senior officials, their numbers doubling from four to eight over the course of the seventeenth century, all experienced men with a lifetime of royal service.[2] The handling of appointments by one specific and homogenous body, it has been argued, streamlined the choosing of officials and constituted a more thorough 'bureaucratisation' of the process, less prey to nepotism.[3] In the case of the *asistente*, however, the king retained the final say, and throughout the century the priority was to appoint men who were seen as committed royal servants, or to fast-track promising candidates to the same end. The proceedings of the *Real Cámara*, in the form of 'consultas' (consultations), reflect this priority, and despite changes to their format, the process remained more or less the same until 1700. Most of the consultas that the *Cámara* drew up for the king, with specific reference to Seville and the *asistente*, can be accessed in the Archivo Histórico Nacional, in the 'Consejos' subsection, legajo (folder) 13.656. This subsection contains papers pertaining to the *asistente* alone (the records for the other *corregidores* of Castile are in different sub-folders), although it is not clear if this different filing was used in the seventeenth century

[1] José Miguel Delgado Barrado, 'La Cámara de Castilla: fuentes legislativas para un estudio institucional (1442-1759)', *Hispania: Revista española de historia*, 52:180 (1992), pp. 62-3.
[2] Richard Kagan, *Students and Society in Early Modern Spain* (Baltimore, 1974), p. 95.
[3] Ibid., p. 95.

itself. If it was, it would suggest a slightly different framing of the position in royal decision-making. The consultas were a list of recommended candidates and occasionally a more detailed description of their experience and qualities. The members of the *Cámara* would then vote on their preferences so that the candidates were presented in descending order of recommendation. As will be seen, at the start of the century the *Cámara* provided more detailed advice, outlining the qualities and experience of candidates, whilst by the mid-century they submitted little more than a list of names to the king.

Wider attitudes to the appropriate selection criteria for *corregidores* may be approached from Jerónimo Castillo de Bobadilla's *Política para corregidores* (see pp. 49-59). Bobadilla's work functions as an 'ideal' to set alongside the 'reality' of the *Cámara*'s bureaucratic procedure, but it also touches on some real practical concerns. As well as a conduct book and political manual for *corregidores* themselves, Bobadilla intended his *Política para corregidores* to be of direct use to the monarch in selecting and managing *corregidores*. Indeed, the first book of the work informs the reader about 'Del gran cuidado y pureza que se ha tener en la eleccion del Corregidor, y qual debe ser su vida y costumbres'.[4] Bobadilla sought to advise the king on the moral qualities that the ideal *corregidor* (and hence *asistente*) should possess. Much of his advice is general: *corregidores* had to fear God, have the virtue of wisdom, and be a moral exemplar to the communities under their authority.[5] Some of his recommendations seem overly optimistic, such as his suggestion that the king should avoid very ambitious men, 'porque la ambicion es la enemiga de justicia', whilst there are more specific moral recommendations, such as that they must not be gamblers, but instead 'ha de dar buen exemplo, y ocupar al tiempo en sus oficios'.[6] The consultas of the *Cámara* occasionally use the same language in describing men put forward: for example in 1628 they assert the candidate 'es de muy bien juicio y talento y siempre se ha gouernado prudentemente y se tiene por muy aproposito para tales oficios'.[7] Yet there was far

[4] Bobadilla, *Política*, 1.1.3, p. 25.
[5] Ibid., p. 38, 49 and 55.
[6] Ibid., p. 44 and 57-8. Wider attitudes to gambling were far from simple, however. See Enrique Garcia Santo-Tomás, 'Outside Bets: Disciplining Gamblers in Early Modern Spain', *Hispanic Review*, 77:1 (2008), pp. 147-62.
[7] Consulta of 11 July 1628, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 20.

from being a consistent concern in the *Cámara* to establish the personalities or moral qualities of each candidate; the consultas give far more space to previous experience in office and in particular to examples of prior service to the monarchy, as we shall see.

Some of Bobadilla's concerns relating to the person of would-be *corregidores* or *asistentes* were specific and practical. A whole chapter of the first book of the *Política* is taken to establish how old a *corregidor* should be when appointed. This was a basic but potentially vital consideration. Young *corregidores* could be dangerous, a cocktail comprised of less experience and more ambition, and might give a city's populace the impression that they had more wisdom than their *corregidor*. On the other hand, being a *corregidor* or *asistente* was an active position, demanding physical vigour as well as bureaucratic acumen. The king had to be sure that appointees were of sufficient physical health to withstand the pressures of the job. Whilst Bobadilla points out that legally the youngest age allowed for a *corregidor* was twenty – as laid down in the *Siete Partidas*, the legal code first compiled in Alfonso X's reign (1252-84) – he recommends that no-one under the age of twenty-six should be appointed.[8] In the *Cámara*'s consultas, the age of candidates for *asistente* was mentioned if there were particular concerns surrounding their health. García Bravo de Acuña was suggested by the *Cámara* for the post in 1628, yet it was acknowledged that he was fifty-two years old, and that he had in the same year been appointed to the position of governor and captain general of the Canary Islands but 'se escuso de aceptarlo por su poca salud'.[9] It seems likely that Acuña's bodily fragility goes a long way to explaining his being overlooked by the king this occasion. On the other hand, none of the men appointed in the period were younger than Bobadilla's suggested minimum age of twenty-six.

The frequent emphasis on the size and complexity of Seville meant that potential *asistentes* needed to have experience in similar positions before they were considered. The records of the *Cámara* make mention of Seville being a city where the demands of government were particularly urgent. In October 1662, for example, a note from the *Cámara* describes Seville

[8] Bobadilla, *Política*, 1.1.7, pp. 113-20.
[9] Consulta of 11 July 1628, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 20.

as ‘el Pueblo que mas necesita de gobierno y caueça’.[10] Accordingly, many of the men proposed as *asistente* had already served as *corregidor* elsewhere. García Bravo de Acuña had been the *corregidor* of Granada for two terms, where ‘sirvó con particular satisfacion asi en las cosas de justicia y gouierno como en las que se ofrecieron de la guerra’ before he was proposed as *asistente* in 1628.[11] The man who was appointed to the post in that year, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, had been the *corregidor* of Toledo since 1620, where ‘[h]a servido con gran cuydado y entereca, teniendo aquella Republica bien gouernida’.[12] The *asistente* of Seville was a step up, both in terms of its value to a statesman’s career and in terms of the difficulty of the post, from acting as a *corregidor* elsewhere. To give another example, the count of Puebla del Maestre was appointed *asistente* in 1642 having previously worked as the *corregidor* of Vélez-Málaga.[13] Previous political experience in a similar role was thus almost essential to being appointed *asistente* of Seville; it was not an entry level position. This is in contrast to how the role of *corregidor* for other cities was perceived by those at the court. Olivares, for example, had described the post of *corregidor* as ‘la primera escuela del gobierno’, an entry level post for aspiring politicians.[14] The *asistente* position required someone of more established pedigree.

Previous experience in government was not the only prerequisite to consider, however. The *asistentes* of Seville also had to have a suitable personal background. Part of this involved their education. Either the *asistente* himself or one of his *tenientes* (their immediate subordinates and assistants) had to have a university education in jurisprudence to deal with their legal responsibilities. This requirement implicated the post of *asistente* in the wider social developments of early modern Spain. The sixteenth century had seen the growing dominance of political and legal offices by a bureaucratic class of *letrados*, men from ‘lesser’ families who had received a university education in jurisprudence and entered into the growing bureaucratic machinery of the Habsburg monarchy which had need of their skills. Richard Kagan has concisely

[10] Consulta of 23 October 1662, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 38.
[11] Consulta of 11 July 1628, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 20.
[12] Ibid.
[13] *Media annata* payment (a tax on the salary of royal officials) for count of Puebla del Maestra, 1642, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp.23.
[14] J.H. Elliott and José F. de la Peña (eds.), *Memoriales y cartas del Conde Duque de Olivares* (2nd edition: Madrid, 2013), vol. 1, 1-2, p. 98.

summed up their social station and growing influence: 'Once regarded as a mere clerk, base and low-born, scorned by the prevailing aristocratic standards of the day, the *letrado*, through his offices, gradually assumed an important place on Castile's social ladder'.[15] In reaching this position, the *letrados* were in competition with the Spanish upper nobility, the 'sword and cape' nobles ('de capa y espada') who had served the Spanish crown in war and government for centuries. In the period 1621-1700, a tension remained between ensuring that officials of the Spanish crown had the necessary skills and experience to perform, and not diluting the 'nobility' of the realm.

Bobadilla had his own take on these issues. He emphasised the essential importance of university training in jurisprudence, but simultaneously asserted that positions such as that of *corregidor* should be held by nobles alone. By emphasising that nobility was not a mere matter of blood but also was a moral quality, Bobadilla tried to avoid the seeming contradiction of his position. He emphasised that an education in 'la ciencia legal, y jurisprudencia' was essential, and that if the *corregidor* himself did not have a legal training, then it was doubly essential that his *teniente* did.[16] More generally, a wide range of knowledge and a complete education was to be valued because of 'la variedad de cosas que cada dia occuren en los gobiernos y administración de justicia'.[17] 'El arte y oficio de gouernar Republica', meanwhile, he concluded is 'la mayor ciencia y arte de todas las artes, la mas dificultosa de aprender, y la mas peligrosa de exercitar'.[18] The role of education in becoming a good political actor was not a generally accepted principal in seventeenth-century Spain. Jerónimo de Ceballos, for example, wrote of the 'arte' of government as being the child of experience, not something acquired as a body of knowledge through learning or reason.[19] At the other extreme, the *arbitrista* Sancho de Moncada argued in 1619 that learning politics was a science, just like learning medicine, and advocated for the founding of a 'university'

[15] Kagan, *Students and Society*, p. 85.
[16] Bobadilla, *Política*, 1.1.6, p. 96, 98 and 101.
[17] Ibid., p. 95.
[18] Ibid., 1.1.3, p. 62.
[19] Jerónimo de Ceballos, *Arte real para el buen govierno de los reyes, y principes, y de sus vasallos* (Toledo, 1623), fo. 105r.

at the court of the Spanish monarchy which would teach politics, as a way to create better ministers.[20]

Bobadilla's highlighting the prerequisite of education might suggest his belief in the growing suitability of the *letrado* hierarchy for positions such as that of *corregidor* or *asistente*. However, he instead turned back to a preference for nobles holding office. One of the chapters to the first book of the *Política* takes as its theme 'la necessidad y conveniencia de la nobleza para los gobiernos y Oficios publicos'.[21] Whilst accepting that there were different levels of ability amongst nobles, for Bobadilla 'gobernarse hombre por el que tiene mucha ciencia, y ninguna nobleza, es cosa intolerable'.[22] Good lineage was reflected in moral behaviour, and to put the ruling of a republic into the hands of people without nobility 'es quitar los ojos de la cabeza, y ponerlos en la cola'.[23] Bobadilla, in lurching between demanding a formal education and defending the rights of nobility to govern, expressed the wider socio-political framework of the seventeenth century in which the two paths to office were in competition.

The consultas of the *Cámara* for the appointment of new *asistentes* also reveal this competition, demonstrating an uncertainty in how to prioritise conflicting factors. Both birth and instruction remained important across the period. In the first half of the century, when records went into more detail, the education of a potential *asistente* might be emphasised. For example, Luis de Paredes was put forward in 1624 and, having read canon law at the University of Salamanca, was described as a 'buen letrado' who had completed his studies with 'buen nombre'. He was a student at the Colegio Arzobispo, one of the *colegios mayores* from which the monarchy demonstrated a marked preference for selecting bureaucrats.[24] However, Paredes was ultimately not selected for the role and his education was only one minor facet in his recommendation. He was also commended for his serving 'con mucha satisfacion en negocios de inportancia' whilst an *oidor* (judge) at the *Chancillería* (royal court of appeal) in Valladolid, and

[20] Sancho de Moncada, *Restauración política de España* (Madrid, 1974), pp. 227-30.
[21] Bobadilla, *Política*, 1.1.4, p. 75.
[22] Ibid., p. 78.
[23] Ibid., p. 82.
[24] Consulta of 20 December 1625, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 17. For the preferring of candidates from *colegios mayores*, see Kagan, *Students and Society*, pp. 92-4.

it seems clear that a distinguished career in one of Castile's universities was only one, potentially quite minor, consideration in the election of an *asistente*.

There are also examples of the *Cámara* recommending men to the position on the basis of family status. At the start of the period, in 1624, the *Cámara* noted that they were recommending nobles 'de capa y espada' (with a greater emphasis on military service) for the vacant position of *asistente*.[25] Nobility remained of vital importance throughout the rest of the period.[26] Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, mentioned above for being selected *asistente* in 1628, was certainly aided by his family's status. The *Cámara* noted that 'su padre y otros muchos de sus pasados sirvieron en la guerra y en occupaciones y officios principales, como es notorio'. On top of the family reputation for office-holding, the wealth Mendoza possessed thanks to his estates – 'tiene buena hacienda' – and the 'lucimiento' of his financial position was mentioned in his favour.[27] On 29 September 1643, when looking for someone to replace the count of Puebla del Maestre at short notice, the *Cámara* submitted a condensed consulta with a list of three names, emphasising that the king already had notice of their 'sangre, obligaciones, proceder y juicio'.[28] As in Bobadilla's text, the consultas of the *Cámara* demonstrate that nobility and breeding, and moral and practical qualities, were seen as going hand in hand.

In Charles II's reign, an experiment by the *Cámara* in how they presented their recommendations to the king in the consultas shows that noble status retained its central importance, but that the appointment processes were increasingly impacted by the sale of noble titles and the challenges of finding appropriate ministers. From 1678, the *Cámara* briefly divided the consultas submitted to the king into a list of candidates 'de ministros' and those 'de titulos' – in other words those who were established political ministers, and those who were recommended on the basis of their noble titles (usually newly-bought). The immediate context in the first year that this category distinction was introduced was a 'falta de ministros' in the king's inner council, and the list was split up into candidates from the 'consejo' and those 'de Titulos'. Those from the

[25] Consulta of 16 September 1624, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp.14.
[26] See Maravall, *Poder, honor y élites*, p. 250.
[27] Consulta of 11 July 1628, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 20.
[28] Consulta of 29 September 1643, AHN Consejos, 13.656, Exp. 25.

latter pool were specifically recommended on the basis of family connections and acquired titles, all being members of the titled nobility or direct descendants of such men. For example, Pedro Sarmiento y Toledo was recommended in 1678 on account of being the 'primogénito' of the count of Salvatierra, who himself had been *asistente* 1634-42. No ministerial experience was mentioned in the consulta.[29] In November 1680 the terminology switched to that of 'ministros' and 'titulos' and this formulation was repeated in 1683, the *Cámara* stating that candidates in the latter group were 'caballeros particulares'.[30] In the appointment processes of 1685 and 1687, the distinction is dropped suddenly and without warning; it returns in a similarly abrupt way in 1691 and 1692, after which it is not used again.[31]

Two contexts informed this brief experiment of the *Cámara*. The first was the sharp increase in the sale of honours and titles during the reign of Charles II, giving a twofold increase to the size of the titled aristocracy in Castile, creating a large body of individuals who had new expectations (but limited experience) of holding office.[32] The second context was the overwhelming dominance of the position of *asistente* by the titled nobility in the seventeenth century, even before Charles's reign, which marked Seville out from other towns and their *corregidores*.[33] Whilst the former context suggests instability and change in the selection of royal governors, the latter suggests that for Seville the appointment patterns were not particularly impacted by the implications of a widespread sale of offices. Indeed, on the five occasions the distinction was made, the candidate from 'de titulos' was only chosen once (the count of Valdeaguila in 1692).[34] The criteria by which *asistentes* were selected demonstrated continuity.

The concern to reward ministers with a history of loyal service to the crown, whilst also giving momentum to the careers of men that had been pre-selected by the monarchy as potentially ending up in the highest echelons of royal administration, ultimately provided the selection

[29] Consulta of 24 September 1678, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 49.
[30] Consultas of 18 November 1680 and 22 July 1683, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 51-2.
[31] Consultas of 13 October 1685, 30 July 1687, 16 October 1691 and 17 November 1692, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 53-4 and 56-7.
[32] Kamen, *Spain in the Later Seventeenth Century*, p. 249.
[33] José Ignacio Fortea Pérez, 'Entre la toga y la espada: Los corregidores andaluces en el siglo XVII (1592-1665)', in Juan Luis Castellano and Miguel Luis López-Guadalupe Muñoz (eds.), *Homenaje a Antonio Domínguez Ortiz*, vol. 2, p. 326.
[34] Consulta of 17 November 1692, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 57.

process for *asistentes* with this continuity. That the *asistente* be someone who the monarchy could depend upon to serve reliably and faithfully was the ultimate priority. A history of royal service was emphasised over and above experience in urban government. Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, whose selection in 1628 has been mentioned already in this analysis thanks to the comparative richness of the reasoning provided in that consulta, is a good example of this priority. The *Cámara* put special emphasis on the 'celo' with which Mendoza had worked in service of the king, raising four hundred infantrymen in the province of Álava in 1615 to serve as an escort for Elizabeth of France when she married Philip IV, then a prince.[35] Additionally, he had served as an extra-ordinary ambassador in England in 1623 and 1624 around the time of the breakdown of the proposed 'Spanish Match'.[36] Mendoza was clearly marked for high-ranking service and was someone the crown considered it could depend on. That such men were chosen for Seville illustrates the city's importance but also that being the best individual for the specific requirements of the job was not the essential prerequisite. If candidates had served in an urban environment, it was still their service in respect to the monarchy that most often warranted comment. Juan Serrano, put forward in the selection process of 1624, had served as a *regidor* in Avila, where he had worked 'con particular demostracion en el ayuntamiento della en las ocasiones de concesiones de miliones y otros servicios'.[37] Royal confidence in its needs and wishes being met was the vital concern in any appointment of a royal urban governor in the early modern period, an obvious point that nonetheless needs restating. One consequence, however, was the neglecting of more specifically urban and environmental issues, as will become clear.

The monarchy prioritising its own interests can also be seen in the exercise of the royal prerogative to ignore the recommendations of the *Cámara* and choose men from outside those listed in the consultas. In the records of the eighteen selection processes that survive for the period 1621-1700, the king chose from outside the initial list on six occasions: without supplying detail of the reasons behind their appointment, Philip IV and Charles II merely named the new *asistente*

[35] Consulta of 11 July 1628, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 20.
[36] Roberta Anderson, 'Diplomatic Representatives from the Hapsburg Monarchy to the Court of James VI and I', appendix to Alexander Samson (ed.), *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles's Journey to Madrid, 1623* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp. 221-2.
[37] Consulta of 20 December 1625, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 17.

and appended their signature to the original consulta. Candidates were often proposed again when the next selection process came around, and the *Cámara* did on occasion express exasperation at the king if a certain individual was ignored even after multiple recommendations. In 1628, they pointed out to Philip IV that their first choice for the role, the count of Villafranca de Gaytán, had been recommended as *asistente* on 16 May 1620, 16 September 1624, and on 20 December 1625, 'y las dos ultimas vezes en primero lugar, y tanuien fue propuesto para el gouierno de galicia en 16 de septiembre de 624'. The king, however, chose to overlook Gaytán once more (in preference Mendoza was chosen, someone with strong ties to the monarchy, and perhaps greater influence with the then-crucial figure of Olivares).[38] On other occasions men who were suggested multiple times (often without their knowledge) eventually were selected: the count of Montellano was overlooked in 1685 by Charles II but then received the post next time around in October 1687.[39] The 'bureaucratisation' of the appointment process that Kagan had described was therefore diluted in Seville's case, as the monarchy often exercised its right to appoint its own choice. The retention of the final decision by the king means it is hard to make too many generalisations about why candidates were chosen overall and more research needs to be done into the relationships at court which impacted on the process. The expectation of loyal service to the crown seems the main constant, but *ad hoc* decisions on the part of the crown were common, discouraging too much experimentation or indeed detail on the part of the *Cámara*.

The specifics of when exactly an *asistente* was replaced again demonstrated that royal priorities came first, and these could have a negative impact on the city government, promoting instability and uncertainty and allowing jurisdictional problems to intensify and other issues to be overlooked. There were a number of competing concerns that might factor into the decision to replace an *asistente*. The process of selecting and appointing an *asistente* could be prompted either by advice from the *Cámara*, an order from the king himself, or the demands of the particular circumstances of the time. Although in theory *asistentes* – like other *corregidores* –

[38] Consulta of 11 July 1628, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 20.
[39] Consultas of 16 October 1685 and 30 July 1687, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 53-4.

were supposed to work for a specific term in office, in practice there was both a degree of confusion over how long the term was supposed to last and a systemic flexibility that allowed for the court and city to react to specific situations. Bobadilla indicated that whilst the law technically limited *corregidores* to a single year in office, this meant that they could not build up the necessary knowledge of the area or develop relationships with local officials, limiting their effectiveness. However, an overly-long term would see these relationships result in losing impartiality. Bobadilla compromised by concluding that *corregidores* should serve no more than five years in office; but a tenure of less than three years would, he suggested, limit their effectiveness.[40]

The king and *Cámara* worked on the tacit understanding that the term of an *asistente* should be about two years. This was certainly the understanding at the start of the reign of Philip IV. A new appointment was made in 1620 because the count of Peñaranda had been in office since 1618.[41] On 16 September 1624, the *Cámara* noted in a similar way that Fernando Ramírez Fariñas had been in the position 'desde el mes de Xbre de 622 y VMd ha mandado por Decreto de 2 deste sele propongan para ella personas de capa y espada, y en la camara ha parecido proponer las siguientes'.[42] In time, Philip IV seemed to become less proactive in prompting the *Cámara* to suggest new *asistentes*. In June 1633, the president of the *Cámara*, Fernando de Valdés y Llano, wrote to the king highlighting that Diego Hurtado de Mendoza had been *asistente* for four and a half years, that he 'juzgando por conveniente vaya sucesor', and that the *Cámara* would propose names. By December of the same year however, the king had not made a decision and Valdés y Llano wrote again urging him to appoint someone, as the *asistente* was getting into frequent arguments with the city council, causing problems in the city.[43] A lack of diligence as much as over-interference could be of inconvenience to the city.

[40] Bobadilla, *Política*, 1.1.17, pp. 282-3 and 285-6
[41] Consulta of 26 May 1620, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 12.
[42] Consulta of 16 September 1624, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 14. In some folders, these initial notes from the King's office survive.
[43] 'El arzobispo de Granada. 10 de Deziembre, 1633, sobre que conviene se prouea la asistencia de Sevilla', AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 21

Unexpected appointments were as frequent as an overlong term. A number of *asistentes* died in office in the second half of the seventeenth century, necessitating replacements. Pedro Mesia de Tobar had been in the position for eighteen months when he died in 1664, Manuel de Giron y Salcedo for under two years in 1680, and the count of Valdeaguila sixteen months in 1695.[44] An early appointment could also be prompted when the king reassigned the incumbent *asistente* to a new position. Again, this situation occurred with greater frequency in the second half of the century and particularly in the reign of Charles II, and offers one of the clearer indications that instability at the centre could prompt uncertainty and instability in Seville's government. In 1692, the *Cámara* wrote that the position of *asistente* 'ha quedado vaco' after the king named the count of Adanero as president of the *Consejo de Hacienda*, only one year into his term as *asistente*.[45] Uncertainty regarding appointments in the 1690s should be connected to the changeable political conditions at the centre. Henry Kamen wrote that in the five-year period 1689-94 'there was no coordination of policy', problems intensified by the death of the count of Oropesa in 1691, a loss which Elliott emphasises removed the last politician of 'real capacity' from Habsburg Spain.[46] This disconnect between central policy and local administration existed before the 1690s, however. In 1678, for example, Seville's city council wrote to the crown requesting the postponement of the appointment into the *Cámara* of the then *asistente* Carlos de Herrera Ramírez de Arellano. Initially seeing their request granted, the city was outraged to receive only another six months with Arellano as *asistente*, as the crown brought the appointment forward again due to 'la falta de ministros' at court. The city wrote to complain; but the *Cámara* advised that it would cause the king great inconvenience to delay the appointment any further.[47] The U-turns of 1678 demonstrate that the decision of when to appoint a new *asistente* was not rigidly procedural, and *ad hoc* adjustments could be made to suit circumstances. In this process, Seville's city council had a certain amount of room in which to communicate their perspective

[44] *Cathalago de los assistentes de la muy noble, y muy leal Ciudad de Sevilla* (1748), Biblioteca Nacional de España, MSS 23130/6, p. 9, 10 and 12.
[45] Consulta of 17 November 1692, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 57.
[46] Kamen, *Spain in the Later Seventeenth Century*, p. 387 and Elliott, *Imperial Spain,* p. 372.
[47] City council to Philip IV, 9 July, consulta of 24 September, and city council to Philip IV, 24 October 1678, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 48-50.

and preference, yet the last word ultimately rested with the king and his ministers at court. The increased frequency of these incidents in the reign of Charles II, especially toward its end, shows how monarchical instability had a direct impact on Castile's towns and cities.

The process by which *asistentes* were selected demonstrated continuity across the century. But instabilities and changes in the crown's priorities and agenda could have a measurable (and often negative) impact on the smooth passage of government in the city. Before an *asistente* had even reached Seville, their selection reflected wider political attitudes and anxieties, which were often distant from the quotidian, urban concerns that he would have to deal with in the city itself. One such problem, which contributed to an ultimately unexplored plan to reform the position of *asistente*, was that of institutional conflict with other royal officials in the city.

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ii. Jurisdictional conflict between the asistente *and the* Real Audiencia *of Seville*

Institutional conflict was one of the most recurrent and pernicious problems faced by the *asistente*, embroiling the royal official in squabbles that stymied effective government and further complicated a position that dealt with countless other issues. As Fortea Pérez has argued, it was not the quality or competence of the officials themselves that generated institutional and jurisdictional conflict, but rather the ill-defined and sprawling range of powers that administrators were assigned.[48] In Seville the problem (which existed across the Kingdom of Castile) was intensified as the *asistente* had to work alongside powerful organisations unique to the city: the bureaucratic machinery of the Spanish Empire's government and trade, and a forceful chapter of the Inquisition, to give two examples which unfortunately fall outside the scope of this thesis to analyse.[49] The *asistente* most frequently fell into conflict with the royal court of appeal in the city – the *Real Audiencia* – and its chief official – the *regente*. As I will explain, these squabbles

[48] Fortea Pérez, '"Príncipes de la república"', p. 92.
[49] Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 82.

ranged from jurisdictional arguments over who had the authority to proceed in various legal cases, to disagreements over the daily maintenance of law and order in the city.

The *Real Audiencia* was a royal court of appeal, a tribunal staffed by *oidores*, founded in the sixteenth century to work alongside the judges of the city government and take justice partly out of the hands of natives and residents of Seville (a situation that in the royal view had led to corrupt and self-interested decisions). It was not the only one of its kind in Spain. It was established following the model of the *Chanchillería* in Valladolid, and a similar court also existed in Granada, for example.[50] The *Audiencia*'s first judges arrived in Seville in 1551, and in 1566 a royal privilege (the Privilege of Brussels) expanded their jurisdiction so that it would embrace civil cases previously within the jurisdiction of the city government.[51] These changes were therefore relatively recent at the start of the reign of Philip IV and the division of responsibilities between city and *asistente* and *Audiencia* were still being contested.

Within this process, the *asistente* had a complicated position. There were many similarities between the *asistente* and the officials of the *Audiencia*, the *regente* in particular. The *regente* and *oidores* of the *Audiencia* had to be recruited from non-natives of Seville to avoid corruption and better represent the king, just as was the case with the *asistente*. Both were selected by recommendation of the *Cámara*.[52] Both were royal agents, ultimately seeking to act in the king's interest. Just as the *asistente* acted with the king's authority and spoke with his voice when enforcing edicts, so did the *regente* and the *Audiencia*'s *oidores* give legal verdicts in the king's name. The *Audiencia* was a royal creation, as was the *asistente*, yet the *asistente* had simultaneously to oversee and work in tandem with Seville's city council, whilst the *Audiencia* remained institutionally distinct from the municipal government.[53] Antonio Domínguez Ortiz has pointed out that whilst 'El Ayuntamiento [the city council] representaba (o pretendía representar)

[50] For relations between the *Chancillería* of Valladolid and the city council there, see Lourdes Amigo Vázquez, *Epifanía del poder regio: La Real Chancillería en el Valladolid festivo: siglos XVII y XVIII* (Valladolid, 2013).
[51] Morales Padrón, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 227 and Bartolomé Clavero (ed.), *Ordenanzas de la Real Audiencia de Sevilla* (Seville, 1995), p. 9 and 82-3.
[52] Morales Padrón, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 228.
[53] See Clavero (ed.), *Ordenanzas*, p. 12, 45 and 86.

al pueblo de Sevilla; la Audiencia sólo representaba al rey'.[54] The *asistente* held an uncomfortable intermediary position between these two spheres, reflected in the frequency with which they became entangled in institutional conflict.

They also dealt with similar problems. The *asistente* was responsible for any civil case involving ten thousand *maravedís* or less being at stake, as well as criminal trials. His authority extended over the entire *tierra* of Seville, although in practice outside the city his role was simply one of conducting regular *visitas* on local courts and correcting any errors in administration or mishandling of justice, tasks often delegated to his *tenientes*.[55] A *visita* was one of the principal mechanisms by which the crown tried to maintain control over its officials, making them accountable for their decisions and answerable to crown officials who inspected their work, through a special inspection of a certain office by another specially-appointed royal official.[56] The *asistente*'s other legal duties included visiting and inspecting the city's prisons every week, typically on a Saturday, and working with the *alcaldes* (ordinary judges of the city council) and *alguaciles* to organise nightly patrols around the city.[57] The presence of the *Audiencia* threatened to complicate their position. As a court of appeal the decisions of the *asistente* would be referred to them, whilst they also (as we will see) tried to exert influence over the city's prisons and the nightly patrols of the city. Although in the *Audiencia*'s *Ordenanzas* (issued in 1603) the *asistente* had been reassured that their authority, titles and prestige would not be impacted, in reality the *Audiencia* started to intrude on their work.[58]

Early in the seventeenth century, these tensions became apparent. In 1623 Fernando Ramírez Fariñas was tasked with carrying out a *visita* for the *Real Audiencia* and the work of the *regente*, at the same time as he took up the post of *asistente* in the city.[59] Those conducting a *visita* did not possess the power to issue punitive sentences for malpractice, but they nevertheless had extensive authority to access the information they needed and pass their remarks on to the

[54] Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 90.
[55] Chamberlain, 'The Corregidor in Castile in the Sixteenth Century', pp. 233-7 and *Ordenanzas*, fo. 12r.
[56] There was also the *residencia*, a routine assessment of the performance of an official at the end of their term. See Fortea Pérez, '"Quid custodit custodes?"', pp. 179-80.
[57] *Ordenanzas*, fo. 12r.
[58] Clavero (ed.), *Ordenanzas*, p. 3.
[59] Fariñas features prominently in Chapter 5 of this thesis, as the *asistente* in office during the flood of 1626.

king for action to be taken. Ramírez Fariñas had complete access to the paperwork produced by the *Audiencia* and could interview who he chose to canvass opinions on the work done there.[60] The *visita* was only completed in 1632, when Fariñas's term as *asistente* ended. An appendix to the *Ordenanzas* of the *Audiencia* listed Fariñas's observations and criticisms of the *Audiencia*'s work in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. They were extensive, ranging from errors and malpractice in bureaucratic procedure (improper delegating of paperwork, information not being noted down fully) to breaches of protocol in legal processes (judges not arriving at decisions confidentially but conferring beforehand).[61] Unsurprisingly, there were objections from members of the *Audiencia*, criticising Fariñas's work and doubting his objectivity. The protests raised by Sancho Hurtado de la Puente, an *oidor* of the *Audiencia*, were the fiercest. He argued that Fariñas had deliberately not given him sufficient time to prepare his responses to issues raised by the *visita* because of the personal hatred that Fariñas had for him because of the times they had run up against each other in legal processes in the city.[62] The deep nature of the investigations meant that it was easy for those under inspection to become antagonised. Hurtado had revoked a number of Fariñas's decisions when they went to the *Audiencia* on appeal, including one in which Fariñas was accused of acting from nepotism in overlooking the irregular constitution of a convent that his maternal great aunt was the founder of. The issue was taken to the *Consejo de Castilla*, after Hurtado paid the seventy thousand *maravedís* necessary to make an appeal. The *Consejo* decided that Fariñas may have proceeded too zealously against Hurtado, but nonetheless upheld most of the former's decisions and allowed him to work as before. The monarchy's bureaucratic processes in regard to urban officials encouraged discord and struggle between the *asistente* and *Real Audiencia*, stoking the fires of jurisdictional conflict in the city.

Discord was also encouraged by the procedure in the city for the *regente* to serve as interim *asistente* in the case of the latter's premature exit. This happened on twelve occasions in

[60] José Antonio Pérez Juan, 'La visita de Ramírez Fariña a la Audiencia de Sevilla (1623-1632)', *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos*, 29 (2002), p. 360.
[61] Clavero (ed.), *Ordenanzas*, fo. 505r.
[62] For what follows see Pérez Juan, 'La visita de Ramírez Fariña', pp. 364-6.

the period 1621-1700, all after 1640.[63] The monarchy sanctioned this policy, as it meant that the stewardship of the city was in the hands of a man that they had appointed themselves, and so, they hoped, someone they could trust. The city council resisted this custom, and on occasion tested the monarchy and the authority of the *regente*, by naming the *tenientes* of the old *asistente* to take on the latter's responsibilities on an interim basis, which they lacked the real legal authority to do. This is what occurred in July 1664, after the count of Molina passed away following the onset of illness (for his funeral see Chapter 3, pp. 126-30). The *tenientes* of the count wrote to the *Cámara* on 10 July with news of Molina's death, noting that they had taken up the *asistente's* duties until a new appointment was made, presumably under encouragement from the city council. The *regente*, Lorenzo Santos de San Pedro, meanwhile, wrote his own letter on 11 July, complaining about the 'pretension' of the city council in naming the *tenientes* as interim *asistente*, stating that the *Cámara* should reverse the decision to 'escusar los enbaraços' and observing that the city was going against precedent with their actions. The *Cámara* agreed, stating in a session of 14 July that the *regente* should serve as the *asistente* on an interim basis whilst they appointed a permanent replacement. However, it seems their preference was not established strongly enough, as the *regente* wrote again on 21 July that the city council was persisting in working with the *tenientes*, and that the *Cámara* had to act faster and more decisively in both preferring the *regente* and appointing a new permanent *asistente*.[64] It is worth noting that at this time the *Cámara* had among its members the count of Villaumbrosa, who had been the *asistente* himself from 1653-62 (this was the longest single term of any *asistente* in my period of study), and it might be assumed that the *Cámara* had the expertise to handle affairs in Seville. When any *asistente* entered Seville, they were entering a city fraught with institutional and jurisdictional tensions that they would have to grapple with as they got on with their job, tensions that resisted easy solutions.

Conflict between the *asistente* and *Audiencia* frequently stemmed from legal cases that both sought jurisdiction over, often hoping to secure a greater share of the legal fines they were entitled to receive or to be seen by the king as the more effective royal agent. The initial flurry of

[63] *Cathalago de los assistentes*, pp. 6-12.
[64] Various correspondence dating 10-22 July 1664, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 39.

royal orders around the time of the *Audiencia*'s creation instructed that neither the *asistente* nor his *tenientes* could 'assistir' in the work of the *Audiencia*'s judges, 'porque assi couiene a nuestro seruicio, y a la buena administracion de la justicia, y gouernacion desta ciudad, y su tierra'.[65] In reality it was the *Audiencia* that more often acted as the jurisdictional aggressor. In November 1661, for example, the *Audiencia* received a royal order commanding it to stop trying to extend its activities into areas under the city's jurisdiction, after receiving complaints from the latter dating back to June 1660.[66] This was during the term as *asistente* of the count of Villaumbrosa, later a member of the *Cámara*. The crown had heard that the *Audiencia* was trying to receive written updates on all legal cases being followed in Seville and in the surrounding territories, including those cases that had not been referred to it, and was trying to claim additional salaries for work it had no authority to undertake. They were accused of working 'con tanto excesso, y exorbitancia' and ordered to desist immediately.[67] However, despite the unequivocal royal criticism and after having acknowledged receipt of the orders, the *Audiencia* continued to overreach. In June 1662, an agent of the crown was sent to the city with a reminder for the *Audiencia* after they heard that the directives were not being obeyed.[68] As the *Audiencia* taking control of cases meant the exclusion of the *asistente* and his *tenientes*, the latter would seek to avoid this happening at all costs.

When the *asistente* and *tenientes* stood their ground, however, the *Audiencia* wasted no time in appealing directly to the crown. In 1638-9, for example, the *alcaldes* of the *Audiencia* wrote to the crown complaining about the conduct of the *asistente*, the count of Salvatierra, and his office, in a case involving one Francisco Martínez, arrested after having a knife fight in the street. They argued that the *tenientes*, acting for the *asistente*, were actively working to obstruct the *Audiencia* from being able to carry out its duties, posting guards to restrict access to the prison where the accused was being held and keeping the *Audiencia* out of the loop as he was

[65] Clavero (ed.), *Ordenanzas*, pp. 2-3.
[66] *Real provision ordenado á esta Ciudad no entrometerse en las causas que perternecieran á los jueces ordinarios: decha noviembre de 1661*, AMS XII.1.17, fo. 103r.
[67] Ibid., fo. 103v-104v.
[68] Ibid., fo. 107r.

interrogated.[69] They accused the *asistente* of 'excesos tan grandes' and that the example of his conduct would cause great harm to the governing of the city. There seems to have been a genuine jurisdictional uncertainty, as the count of Salvatierra argued that he and his *tenientes* had jurisdiction in the case and that the *Audiencia* were overreaching by trying to suspend the ordinary course of justice.[70] The king's verdict in this case has been lost, but it is clear that the crown was unable to prevent repeat arguments. In 1647 officials of the *Audiencia* again complained about the behaviour of the office of the *asistente* during a legal trial. The *Audiencia* used the same language as before, citing 'abusos', and indeed the complainants were mostly the same people: Leornardo Enriques, one of the *oidores*, signed both letters of complaint in 1638 and 1647. So even though by the latter date the *asistente* was a different individual, the count of Puebla del Maestre, the *Audiencia* officials still felt excluded and threatened by his office.[71] Repeated complaints from the same individuals across a period of a decade demonstrate that new *asistentes* were entering into delicate jurisdictional situations, with members of rival institutions waiting for any opportunity to undermine their authority and influence (judges of the *Real Audiencia* were typically in office for a lot longer, being replaced only by reappointment or death). Additionally, the enforced involvement of senior officials as result of arguments between subordinates defeated the point of the initial act of delegation. Overall, the arguments consumed time that might otherwise have been spent on all the regular demands of urban government.

The *Audiencia* and *asistente* also argued over more regular processes of law and order. One quarrel that came up on numerous occasions throughout the seventeenth century concerned the issue of the *rondas*, the provisioning of nightly patrols in the city. Again, royal intervention was required. In both 1678 and 1681 the crown wrote to the *oidores* of the *Audiencia* asking them to desist from trying to interfere in the running of the patrols. The *Audiencia* believed that the privilege of Brussels of 1566 granted them the authority to run their own patrols and since

[69] *Los alcaldes de Cuadra de la ciudad de Sevilla contra el conde de Salvatierra, asistente en ella sobre jurisdicción en un desafío*, AHN Consejos 25.549, Exp. 7.
[70] Ibid.
[71] In this instance, the agent of Seville's city council at court, one Gerónimo del Pueyo Araucel, came out in support of the *asistente*, saying that he was working well to provide the king's justice. See his letter of 10 September 1647, AHN Consejos 27.847, Exp. 7.

introducing the practice they had seen a great improvement in law and order on the city's streets.[72] They argued that their stance came from a genuine desire to improve public safety and commented that the city's circumstances at the time merited extra vigilance: a lack of grain and food supplies in the city had increased the likelihood of crime and unrest on the streets at night.[73] The royal response, however, demonstrates a belief that the *Audiencia*'s appeals to environmental crisis and protecting public order were disingenuous. A letter from the crown to the *Audiencia* in 1681 recalled that the latter body had been warned in 1621, 1650, 1678 and again in 1681 not to 'entrometer' on the work of the *asistente* in providing patrols, the *asistente* acting as 'cabeça de la jurisdicion ordinaria'. In commenting directly on how 'aviamos sido servido de despachar diferentes provisiones' on the issue, the crown expressed its exasperation with the repeated transgressions of the *Audiencia*.[74] The king's office argued that the city's patrols, under authority of the *asistente*, were entirely sufficient and ordered the *Audiencia* to drop the issue entirely.[75] Throughout the century, however, the *Audiencia* felt able to test the boundaries of the authority of the city government and the *asistente*, although it is not always clear if their concerns were not genuine. In any case, jurisdictional conflict was the norm rather than the exception, and prevented the smooth functioning of urban government.

A final illustration of this theme is the serious dispute between Diego de Cárdenas, the count of Puebla del Maestre (*asistente* 1642-3 and 1647-51, his father Lorenzo had been *asistente* 1626-9), and Juan de Santelices y Guevara, *regente* of the *Real Audiencia* and interim *asistente* in 1644. The count of Puebla del Maestre wrote to the *Consejo de Castilla* on 29 September 1643 asking to be replaced as *asistente*, citing the behaviour of Santelices y Guevara as his reason for wanting to leave the post. According to the count, Santelices y Guevara had been actively working against him, trying to poison his reputation behind his back so that the count no longer

[72] *Consulta de la Real Audiencia á S.M. en 12 de Setiembre de 1678, sobre las rondas de sus alcaldes, resistidas á pretestos de su jurisdiccion por la Asistencia y el cabildo de esta ciudad*, AMS IV.31.74, fo. 274r and 276r-v.
[73] Ibid., fo. 277r.
[74] *Registrada ante Iuan Antonio Guerrero, en 10 de Abril de 1681*, AMS IV.31.75, fo. 278v-279r.
[75] Ibid., fo. 281v-282v.

felt he could serve the crown usefully in the city.[76] Earlier that same year, however, the crown had written to Santelices y Guevara asking for a report on the count's performance in the office of *asistente* as they were concerned about the governing of the city in general. The request is a clear sign of royal anxiety about Seville's government, foreshadowing the second attempt at reform in 1652. The *regente* responded to this request with a report that praised the count's conduct – 'es Honbre de mucha virtud exemplo y gran verdad fielisimo', who worked punctually and 'mui zeloso' to administer the city's government. Santelices y Guevara blamed the problems faced by the count on the 'blandura' of the men who previously held the position, which had allowed the 'poderosos' of Seville and the city council to exert too much power and present an obstinate front in the council-chamber.[77]

Santelices y Guevara's report appears a sensitive and perceptive diagnosis of some of the political obstacles faced by the *asistente* in the city council, so it is surprising that six months later the *asistente* raised serious accusations against the *regente*'s conduct. The *regente*'s report might have been trying to keep the crown out of the loop as much as possible, so that the *regente* and the *Audiencia* could be able to prise more powers away from the *asistente*. By portraying the office of *asistente* as ineffectual against the vested interests of the rich and powerful nobles, the *regente* was indirectly making the case for the *Audiencia* as the best means by which royal power could be enacted in the city. Such an approach would be consistent with the general behaviour of *Audiencia* officials throughout the century. In this instance the monarchy moved to grant the count of Puebla del Maestre his wishes and a replacement *asistente*, Gaspar de la Cueva, the marquis of Bedmar, was appointed.[78] The city council tried to prevent this decision, writing to the king's *Junta de Guerra* (emergency war council) on 13 October 1643 that the war with Portugal (the Portuguese Restoration War, 1640-68) advised against replacing the city's *asistente* as things

[76] Count of Puebla del Maestre to *Consejo de Castilla*, 22 September 1643, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 25.
[77] 'Responde sobre el proceder del Conde de la puebla en el exercicio del oficio de asistente', Juan de Santelices y Guevara, 4 March 1643, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 24.
[78] Gaspar de la Cueva (1594-1664) was the second brother of Alfonso de la Cueva (1572-1655, a cardinal and previously Spain's ambassador in Venice), inheriting the title (only created in 1614) in 1626.

were in balance; praising at the same time the count's work governing the city in a time of war.[79] They were seemingly unaware that the count had taken the initiative in asking to be replaced, yet were canny enough to take advantage of the different administrative and bureaucratic bodies in the court itself. The *junta* wrote to the king directly on 2 November, supporting the validity of the city's complaints, and the king again consulted with the *Cámara* over how to proceed. The *Cámara* replied on 4 November reminding the king that the count himself had asked to be replaced. This back and forth in the court demonstrates that the same fragmentation of jurisdictions that existed in Seville also existed at the court, and could be exploited by the Seville city council to try to influence events. In this case, they were unsuccessful: the marquis of Bedmar entered the city in January 1644.[80]

Four years later, in 1647, the monarchy was struggling to appoint a new *asistente*. The first two appointees had both turned down the position, perhaps not wanting to commit to such an uncertain post with such heavy responsibilities – the war with Portugal necessitated an increased workload from the *asistente* (see Chapter 3, pp. 111-8), and candidates were maybe aware of the jurisdictional disagreements with the *Real Audiencia*. Clearly unsure as to how to proceed, the *Cámara* advised the king on 24 April that it was entirely in his hands, and those of his closest advisers, who to appoint.[81] The king turned to the count of Puebla del Maestre to fill the void in the city's government, asking him to return to the city as *asistente*. The count agreed, but only on certain conditions. In a separate document, the letter in which the count outlined his demands survives, and provides a vivid account of how the jurisdictional conflicts between the *Audiencia* and *asistente* had escalated. His first point was that the new *regente*, Geronimo del Pueyo, had to work alongside him 'con toda amistad y correspondencia para la mejor administracion de justicia y Gouierno de aquella republica'. Outlining exactly what this entailed, the count insisted that the *Audiencia* should respect 'los privilegios de la Ciudad' and not intrude on the *asistente*'s duties by

[79] City council to *Junta de Guerra*, 13 Octover 1643 and *Real Cámara* to Philip IV, 2 November 1643, AHN Consejos, 13.656, Exp. 25.
[80] Consulta of 6 November 1643, AHN Consejos, 13.656, Exp. 25.
[81] Consulta of 24 April 1647, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 29. Beltrán de Guevara, the marquis of Campo Real, later appointed governor of Sardinia (1651), and Adán Centurion de Córdoba, the marquis of Estepa, were the men who turned down the post of *asistente*. The records of the *Cámara* note only that they were excused the post, not why.

carrying out prison visits or organising city patrols. He also asserted that the *Audiencia* was not to interfere in the issue of raising or leading militia, a duty which fell to the *asistente* as the captain general.[82] The king noted that everything should be done to meet the wishes of the count, who took up the post with these reassurances. *Asistentes* often had to assert their jurisdictional authority forcefully within the city. There were a number of institutions, most prominently the *Real Audiencia*, who were keen to increase their own authority in respect to the *asistente*. Those involved in governing Seville were thus in a constant process of renegotiating the limits of their power.

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iii. A viceroy for Seville: Philip IV's plans to counter the 'poca justicia' in the city

Twice during his reign, in 1625 and again in 1652, Philip IV explored the possibility of a significant reorganisation of Seville's political structure, by combining the roles of *asistente* and *regente* of the *Real Audiencia* into a single, more powerful post, to be called the *virrey* – a viceroy for Seville, such as the Spanish monarchy employed in Mexico and Peru. The plans were in response to perceived problems of government in the city, among which the jurisdictional conflict described above figured prominently. The failure of the plans to be implemented will be explained first by a general cultural and intellectual attitude that was essentially conservative and discouraged 'novedades', especially in politics; and secondly by the reluctance of Seville's city council to approve the changes. Their fierce opposition suggests there was a satisfaction with the status quo among Seville's urban elite, putting limits on what a supposedly 'absolutist' royal authority was able to impose on the city.

In both 1625 and 1652 the proposed changes involved the fusing of the positions of *regente* and *asistente* into a single office, combining their duties and responsibilities. On 23 December 1625 a note from King Philip IV to the *Real Cámara* read:

[82] Consulta of 13 May 1647, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 30.

> Por personas platicas y [z]elosas de mi servicio seme ha referido, que convendria mucho a el, y a la buena administracion de la justicia, y govierno en Sevilla, que los officios de Regente de aquella Audiencia, y Asistente de la ciudad, estuviessen en una solo persona, con que dando se la mano, y ayudando se del un officio y del otra podra acudir mejor a todo.[83]

The 'people close to me' refers to the count-duke of Olivares, Philip IV's *privado*, or favourite, and the dominant figure of politics in Castile from Philip IV's ascension until Olivares's downfall in 1643. Olivares had an intimate knowledge of, and keen interest in, Seville from his time living there during the years 1607-15. His family's estates were in Andalusia and he considered himself, despite being born in Rome, a 'son of Seville'. He maintained an involvement in Seville's urban life after moving to Madrid and the court, despite rarely travelling to the city itself. For example, the position of *alcaide* of Seville's Real Alcázar, responsible for maintenance of the structure and the king's privileges in respect to its water supply, was given by the king to Olivares and his family in perpetuity in 1621.[84] Politically, Olivares's affection for the city and his acknowledging it as the realm's principal city prompted him to exert his authority to improve its governance. Fernando Ramírez Fariñas, appointed *asistente* in 1622, was a trusted confidant of Olivares, and Olivares in all probability was responsible for his appointment.[85] Over and above this direct involvement in the selection of Seville's royal representative, Olivares saw great harm in the coexistence in the city of the *Real Audiencia* and the *asistente*, regarding the arrangement as an unsatisfactory structure for providing justice, and providing Seville's nobles on the city council with opportunities to outmanoeuvre the crown's other agents. This was not a line he took with other cities where an *Audiencia* co-existed alongside the municipal government, but reflected Seville's importance in his thoughts and his knowledge of conditions there.[86] Olivares outlined this opinion in the so-called *Gran Memorial* he presented to Philip IV in December 1624, when the king was just nineteen years old. Elliott and de la Peña believe that the *Memorial* should be understood 'como una guía preparada para un rey joven por un valido que, aunque doblada en

[83] Philip IV to *Real Cámara*, 23 December 1625, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 18.
[84] Fernández Chaves, *Política y administración*, p. 234.
[85] For all of the above see Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares*, pp. 28-30.
[86] Not that there weren't also jurisdictional disagreements in these other places. See Vázquez, *Epifanía del poder regio*, pp. 210-1.

edad, era también relativamente joven'.[87] Practical and didactic, the *Memorial* includes a systematic guide to the various councils, courts, and political offices across the kingdoms, so that the new monarch should become familiar with them. The guide includes a description of the *Real Audiencia* in Seville, and Olivares uses this entry to highlight the institutional and jurisdictional problems outlined above. Having described the structure and nomenclature of the *Audiencia* and its officials, the soon-to-be count-duke writes:

> En esta audiencia de Sevilla se experimentan grandes inconvenientes de la división de asistente, que es la cabeza de la justicia ordinaria, y el regente, que lo es de la audiencia. Emulación tal que casi siempre deshace la audiencia lo que el asistente dispone.[88]

Olivares was quick to emphasise that these problems were not the fault of the men appointed to the senior positions of the city, the *asistente* at that time being Fariñas, who Olivares characterised as a man of 'justicia y entereza'. Rather, the problem was 'el gobierno con dos cabezas', and Olivares assured the king that he would work to propose 'el remedio más conveniente pronto a tan gran daño'.[89] Olivares urged, with customary hyperbole, the particular importance of Seville as the most 'principal' city under Philip's rule ('valiéndole a V. Majd. más de un tercio que todos los otros reinos de Castilla juntos'), and deployed the medical and bodily metaphors prevalent in political thought at the time to press home the case. Seville's 'two-headed' government – 'gobierno de dos cabezas' – is presented as an unnatural sickness.[90]

The royal visit of Philip IV to Seville in 1624 was still fresh in the memory of the young king, and the fruits of Olivares's reflections were put before a sceptical *Real Cámara* by the king almost one year to the day after the supposed date of the presentation of the *Gran Memorial*.[91] After five days with no response from the *Cámara*, the king followed up his original note with another on 28 December 1625 in which he reiterated that he thought it would be useful to test the policy of combining the offices of *asistente* and *regente* in Seville for a time, due to the 'poca

[87] *Memoriales y cartas*, vol. 1, 1-2, p. 78.
[88] Ibid., *Gran Memorial (Instrucción secreta dada al rey in 1624)*, p. 99.
[89] Ibid., p. 100.
[90] Ibid.
[91] For this visit see Jacinto de Herrera y Sotomayor, *Jornada que su Magestad hizo a la andaluzia* (Madrid, 1624).

justicia' being administered in the city.[92] Philip's language echoed that of his *privado*, and Olivares's hand should be detected in the impatient anxiety for a response of the *Cámara*. However, on the matter of restructuring Seville's political authority, Olivares was to run up against a conservative attitude, hostile to innovation and change, which hindered his attempts at reform in other areas too. The *Cámara* replied in a note also dated 28 December that the king should err against introducing a 'novedad' into the governing of the city, because 'seria de grande inconveniente para todo'. In grudging acknowledgement of the influence of Olivares, the *Cámara*'s note did go on to counsel that if 'personas zelosas del servicio de VMd' (i.e. Olivares) had outlined specific reasons or revealed 'papeles que les parezca son de inportancia' recommending the change, then the king, having also seen them, should do 'que pareciere necesario'.[93]

The *Cámara's* cautioning against novelty out of principle is indicative of wider cultural and political attitudes, a contemporary mental framework that had a real and observable impact on the monarchy's approach to managing issues of local urban government. Throughout the period, wider political attitudes cautioned against reform and 'newness', instead promoting 'conservation', or perhaps 'restoration'. Elliott in his important article 'Self-Perception and Decline in Early Seventeenth-Century Spain' emphasised that *conservación* was the 'instinctive response' to *declinación*, and that the art of government relied on preserving what one already had.[94] Although the *arbitristas*, a diverse selection of thinkers that came up with a range of different responses to Castile's economic and political crisis in the first decades of the seventeenth century, promoted 'novelties', the general hostility to innovation and new ideas comes out clearly in the consultas of the *Cámara*. Elliott speculated that this wider attitude, in conflict with those pushing for change, may have played a role in undermining Olivares's efforts at reform, and in the case of Seville and Olivares's proposals for the city, we seem to have clear evidence that it did indeed have an impact.[95]

[92] Philip IV to *Real Cámara*, 28 December 1625, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 18.
[93] *Real Cámara* to Philip IV, 28 December 1625, ibid.
[94] Elliott, 'Self-Perception and Decline', p. 250.
[95] Ibid., pp. 258-9.

The general attitude of hostility to novelty and innovation, indeed, was reflected in how the roles of *corregidor* and *asistente* itself were formulated in the seventeenth century. Bobadilla, writing on the inconveniences caused by a *corregidor* being in office for only a short time, commented that:

> la declinacion de las Republicas nace de los nuevos oficiales y ministros, que traen nuevos consejos, nuevos definios, nuevas leyes, nuevas costumbres, nuevos editos, nuevo estilo, nuevos juyzios, nuevos modos, nueva mundança de todas las cosas, teniendo en poco las costumbres antiguas, sin tener consideracion a que sean de provecho, ò daño, como se hable ellos.[96]

Couched in a respect for classical authority, Bobadilla's anxiety about the decline of republics reveals a more pressing contemporary concern for the Spanish Monarchy. For José Antonio Maravall, the seventeenth century was the 'baroque age', in which a 'force reconstitutive of traditional interests was smuggled in by means of the novelty that one was attracted to for enjoyment'. In other words, the age's novelties and innovations, particularly in Spain, were shallow: 'secondary' and 'external'. This attitude was in response to the social 'consciousness of unrest and unease', itself an emotional and intellectual response to societal crises prompted by 'critical economic fluctuations'.[97] Following Maravall, Fernando Jesús Bouza Alvarez believed that 'ningún tiempo ha habido cuyo orden mental fuera tan poco amigo de las novedades como el Barroco'.[98] The response then of the *Cámara* to the king (and to Olivares) in December 1625, leading to the temporary abandonment of the plans to combine the *asistente* and the *regente* (the count of Puebla del Maestre accepted the post of *asistente* alone in May 1626), fits into a wider set of intellectual attitudes and a mental framework that discouraged change.[99]

The same language of the inconvenience of novelty was to be evoked again when the plans to unite the offices of *regente* and *asistente* resurfaced in 1652, in the immediate aftermath to urban riot in Seville in May of that year, with the city still in mourning and shock from its population losses in the plague of 1649. The riot of 1652 has been well studied by historians, for

[96] Bobadilla, *Política*, 1.1.17, p. 282.
[97] Maravall, *Culture of the Baroque*, pp. 19-20 and 226-7.
[98] Fernando Jesús Bouza Alvarez, 'La cosmovisión del siglo de oro. Ideas y supersticiones', in José Alcalá-Zamora (ed.), *La vida cotidiana en la España de Velázquez* (Madrid, 2014), p. 224.
[99] Count of Puebla del Maestre to the president of the *Real Cámara*, 26 May 1626, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 17.

example books by Antonio Domínguez Ortiz and Juan Gelabert, whilst it also receives mention in Geoffrey Parker's *Global Crisis*, so I will not describe the events in any detail.[100] I do wish to briefly emphasise both the environmental preconditions for the riot and the actions and role of the *asistente*. Ortiz de Zúñiga was unambiguous that the reason for popular ire against the government in 1652 was 'la miserable violencia de la hambre', as food shortage had been provoked by a series of severe winters which had resulted in the 'esterilidad de todos frutos'.[101] The city's bread sellers were the initial targets of the rioters' anger, but this was soon transmuted into fury against the city's government; the cry of '¡Viva el Rey de España, y muera el mal Gouierno!' demonstrating that it was the king's ministers in the city rather than the king himself who were blamed.[102] In response, the *asistente* – Pedro de Zúñiga y Rodríguez (1603-68), the marquis of Avilafuente – left Seville and went to Alcalá de Guadaira, some ten kilometres to the southeast and a major supplier of bread to the city, to use his executive authority to secure bread to calm the rioters, a job which by all accounts he performed sluggishly.[103] It was thus other officials, chief among them the *regente* of the *Real Audiencia,* Pedro de Zamora Hurtado, who took the most active role in negotiating with the rioters and orchestrating their eventual defeat.[104] Ortiz de Zúñiga's account of the riot, normally uncritical of the behaviour of royal and public officials, does in this instance comment on the inconvenience caused by the 'tardança' of the marquis in returning with bread after setting out on the mission.[105] The riot illustrates the central importance of the consequences of environmental issues for urban politics, that the *asistente* could easily become the target of popular resentment, and that they were expected to be able to deal with crisis situations.

After the riot, the marquis of Avilafuente repeatedly asked for his own removal, seemingly scarred by the event. It was in the eventual granting of this request that the crown again

[100] Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *Alteraciones Andaluzas* (Madrid, 1973), Juan E. Gelabert, *Castilla convulsa (1631-1652)* (Madrid, 2001) and Parker, *Global Crisis*, pp. 283-4.
[101] Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales*, pp. 739-40.
[102] Ibid., p. 739.
[103] Domínguez Ortiz, *Alteraciones Andaluzas*, pp. 106-7.
[104] Ibid., p. 105. Domínguez Ortiz sharply criticises the marquis of Avilafuente for his 'impotencia' during the riot.
[105] Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales*, p. 743.

asked the *Real Cámara* to consider the potential benefits of uniting the positions of *regente* and *asistente* in one individual, on 22 June 1652, some days after issuing royal pardons to rioters in the city:

> en consideracion de las repetidas instancias que me ha hecho el Marques de Aguilafuente para quesele conceda liçençia, he uenido en que selede pero que para pueda uenirse, le vaya sucessor, y respecto de que ester deser Persona, de toda authoridad y grado, y que es menester que sele agreguen todas las jurisdiciones, pues esto es lo que mas puede authorizar la execucion y cumplimiento de las resoluciones se tomazen y que cessen conpetencias como se a considerado y propuesto tantas vezes...[106]

He ordered the *Cámara* to confer on the suggestion and then put forward a consulta with a list of names of potential candidates to take on both posts. Despite Seville's riot occurring over a decade after the downfall of the count-duke of Olivares, in a moment of deep concern about the state of Seville's governance, Philip IV returned to plans proposed by his former *privado* twenty-seven years previously. In contrast to 1625, the suggested reforms in 1652 were an immediate response to a direct crisis, and crown officials turned back to previously abandoned plans in something approaching a mood of desperation.

For the 1652 proposals, the records of the *Real Cámara* include the written response of Seville's city council to the suggestion of the monarch. In forcefully opposing the proposal, the city council's letter highlights not only the previously mentioned contemporary intellectual opposition to novelty, but also the entrenched position of the urban elite of the city. In their response of 27 August, the city council outlined a number of reasons that 'nouedad tan grande' would result in 'gra[n]des incombenientes'. Some of these tried to play on the monarchy's fears, such as in the emphasis that the current division between *asistente* and *regente* made it possible to limit the ambition of 'Algunos gouernadores' and that if united in a single person, the residents of Seville would be responding to 'la voluntad' of one individual, who might act guided by 'su pasion' without the check of another royal official to moderate their actions.[107] Elaborating on the potential consequences of such a situation, the letter speculates that the city might be abandoned by 'la gente del comercio', intensifying the problems of the population losses from the 1649

[106] Philip IV to *Real Cámara*, 22 June 1652, AHN Consejos 13,656, Exp. 34.
[107] City council to Philip IV, 27 August 1652, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 35.

plague, and that as a result the monetary contributions of the city to the crown would be 'de muy poco valor, quando son tan necesarios para los ejercitos que VM sustenta por el bien destos Reynos y defensa de la santa fee catolica'.[108] Suggesting that reform might hurt the royal purse was an astute approach to make the crown reconsider and demonstrates that local elites and urban governments, far from being the passive recipients of an increasingly absolutist bureaucracy, had an array of strategies to shape royal policy in accordance with their wishes.[109] The city council also emphasised their history of loyalty and service to the crown, particularly during the recent riot. They concluded:

> espera Receuirlas oy en la conserbacion de sus privilegios y del gouierno politico que tiene en conocida utildad de sus Vezinos que postrada a los Real pies de VM suplica humilmente la mande conserbar en el sin otra nouedad.[110]

The monarchy, in fact, had only grudgingly bestowed honours upon a limited number of Seville's nobility in the aftermath to the riot, only distributing twelve habits to military orders (seen and thus valued as a guarantee of nobility), having formed a special *junta* just for the purpose.[111] The civic elite of Seville were not entirely on sure ground when stressing their faithfulness and loyalty, having impatiently clamoured for rewards after a struggle in which their own interests were threatened as much as the monarchy's; but in returning to the importance of 'conservacion' and the stated suspicion of 'novedades', they were reflecting the ideology of an age.

The letter of the city was acknowledged by the king with a brusque note on the outside of the missive itself, which simply indicated his acknowledgement of their arguments – 'quedo con esta noticia'. A decision was made, one that given the previous recommendation of the *Cámara* back in 1625 seemed likely even without the input of Seville's city council. On 7 September 1652, the king asked his *Cámara* to propose new appointments for the offices of *asistente* and *regente* in Seville 'cada una de por si': the second time plans to unite the two had been shelved. Philip IV did, however, state that he would keep trying to establish whether the two jurisdictions might be

[108] Ibid.
[109] For the relationship between the crown and local urban elites, see especially Antoni Passola Tejedor, 'Poder local y poder real: un pacto tácito', in Jesús Bravo (ed.) *Espacios de poder*, vo. 2, pp. 45-72.
[110] City council to Philip IV, 27 August 1652, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 35.
[111] Domínguez Ortiz, *Alteraciones Andaluzas*, pp. 128-9 and for the military orders, see his, 'Comercio y Blasones. Concesiones de hábitos de órdenes militares a miembros del Consulado de Sevilla en el siglo XVII', *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, 33 (1976), pp. 217-56.

combined in 'una caueza' at some point.[112] Despite this stated aim, however, no further steps were taken to make this alteration, and Seville's political structure remained unchanged throughout the rest of the reigns of the last two Spanish Habsburgs.

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These suggested reforms should be placed in a wider context. As part of the 'decline of Spain', many historians have observed 'stagnation' in the bureaucratic machinery of the Spanish monarchy. For example, it has been noted that the volume of paperwork and administrative energy exhibited by the *Consejo de Castilla* slackened noticeably from the reign of Philip III onward, a development explained by a nod to 'decline'.[113] Yet the royal attempts at reforming the political structures of Seville suggest that rather than seeing a lack of change as simply a by-product of generalised decline, historians might consider political continuity at both the centre and the level of the city as the product of more specific trends: specifically both an intellectual atmosphere that cautioned against novelty, and by the monarchy's reliance on negotiation to secure the support of local elites. The dynamics of how local elites articulated and negotiated their role and status in the wider monarchy has been the subject of recent study most especially for the context of Spain's empire in America; more might however be done to establish how this process operated in Castile itself, particularly in Andalusia and a city of such importance as Seville.[114] The nobles of seventeenth-century Seville, who dominated the city council, were comfortable with the existence of both *asistente* and *regente*, specifically in the belief that the former was an official who they might exert influence over directly to represent their interests to the king. Under a unified royal official, with an increased range of powers, Seville's urban elite were concerned that their influence might be significantly diminished. Institutional and jurisdictional conflict in the city was not just a localised urban problem but came repeatedly to occupy the crown's

[112] Philip IV to *Real Cámara*, 7 September 1652, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 36.
[113] Salustiano de Dios, *Fuentes para el estudio del Consejo Real de Castilla* (Salamanca, 1986), p. xlv.
[114] See, for example, the essays in Bartolomé Yun Casalilla (ed.), *Las redes del imperio: Élites sociales en la Monarquía Hispánica, 1492-1714* (Madrid, 2009).

energies. Both the specific priorities of the city's urban elite and a wider mental and intellectual framework ensured the prevention of mooted reforms to combat the problems. Individual, *ad hoc* responses to specific disagreements and crises remained the default method by which confusions over jurisdiction between the city's various royal institutions were handled.

3. Death and taxes: The *asistente* and governing Seville, 1621-1700

Historians increasingly speak in terms of 'vulnerability', of 'resilience', of 'disaster', and of 'crisis' in respect to urban history.[1] In addressing, in these terms, why certain cities prove remarkably adaptable to exogenous shocks while others fail to tackle their problems, disasters and crises come to be acknowledged as social and political processes as much as arbitrary 'events'. Much more work remains to be done on early modern cities, however, to dispel the illusion that pre-modern cities were somehow more 'static' places, less prone to change and industry, than their modern counterparts.[2] Although the language of early modern Spanish politics did not speak in terms of disaster or crisis, political governors were well aware that ultimately their role boiled down to matters of everyday life, such as food supply and public health. In this chapter, I start to turn more attention to the winding, knotted streets of early modern Seville and the pressing, quotidian needs of its residents.

The *asistente* was still, however, an agent of the king, and acted to represent the power and carry out the wishes of Philip IV and then Charles II. I will begin by highlighting the impact of directly royal assignments – specifically warfare and taxation – on both the *asistente*'s role and the city more generally. War with Portugal during the years 1640-68 in particular had a direct and immediate impact on the city, involving the sustained effort of the *asistentes* in office during that time. The often chaotic manner in which royal tax collection was organised, meanwhile, contributed to jurisdictional problems outlined in the previous chapter. I then look at food supply and public health – particularly the threat of plague. My analysis of the response of the *asistente* and city council anticipates my later examination of flooding. I conclude by looking at what happened when an *asistente* died in Seville whilst in office, and the ceremonial funeral held in 1664 for the count of Molina. *Asistentes* themselves were not immune from the urban fluctuations of life and death which they tried to regulate. The central themes of this chapter are that urban

[1] See, for example, Daniel Curtis, *Coping with Crisis: The Resilience and Vulnerability of Pre-Industrial Settlements* (Farnham, 2014).
[2] Stöger, 'Environmental Perspectives on Pre-Modern European Cities', in Knoll and Reith (eds.), *An Environmental History of the Early Modern Period*, p. 51.

government – even for elite royal appointees such as *corregidores* and *asistentes* – was hands-on, demanding, and subject to the contextual factors of the natural and built environment; that these governors would frequently have to balance royal orders against what they saw as the pressing quotidian needs of the city; and that they were not necessarily royal ciphers in the face of such orders, but did frequently try and act in a city's best interests.

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i. War and taxes: the asistente *as royal agent*

The *asistente* embodied and enacted the authority of the king in the city. For Alonso, *corregidores* never exercised their authority or jurisdiction in their own name, but instead everything was done in the name of the king they represented.[3] As we have seen, in practice the extent (symbolic and actual) of this authority was negotiated, and the enacting of the king's authority frequently resisted. Two of the most direct ways in which *asistentes* could work in the city as more visibly 'royal' figures were when they were called on to collect taxes for the king and when they were required to take up military responsibilities.

In Parker's analysis of seventeenth-century Spain, royal demands for taxation were one of the vital ingredients of the 'fatal synergy', comprising human and natural factors that combined with environmental crisis to prompt a 'global crisis'. The reign of Philip IV comes in for particular criticism in this respect – 'more than any other seventeenth-century ruler, Philip intensified the impact of climate change by disastrous policy choices' (specifically in relation to taxation and finances) – but the last two Habsburgs are both derided for their 'abysmal' fiscal policies.[4] Storrs, as part of his general concern to defend Charles II's record, emphasises that after 1665 no new forms of taxation were introduced and that the monarchy did make attempts to reform that

[3] Alonso, *El corregidor castellano*, p. 131.
[4] Parker, *Global Crisis*, p. 289.

administration of finance. A *superintendente general* of finance was established in 1687 to oversee fiscal management, and coinage revaluations were made less frequent.[5] The pressures inherited by the last Habsburg were insurmountable, however; soaring defence costs added to the effects of a debased coinage in kingdoms and territories already exhausted by continuous warfare. The 1630s-60s was the period of greatest intensity in terms of tax collection, as evidenced by data for the collection of the *millones*, special levies introduced in 1590 following the disaster of the Armada but which became a more regular source of wealth throughout the seventeenth century.[6] Charles II's monarchy had to deal with the consequences of over-taxation, but reduced tax demands may have been prompted as much by military defeat as policy choices.

It is not my purpose here to apportion blame for financial mismanagement between the final two Spanish Habsburgs. Rather I want to stress the human and urban costs and consequences of royal taxation, particularly as it impacted the work of the *asistente* in Seville. Some recent studies have doubted the direct local impact of royal financial problems, suggesting that whilst the Crown's fiscal system creaked and groaned, prospects of longer-term economic prosperity were developing in the kingdom's peripheries. Yun Casalilla has suggested that many regions were advancing local specialisms and introducing new crops that would bring profit in the long-term. Measures such as changing the coinage could also be harmful initially, but of benefit later.[7] Even if policy changes and the development of markets at the periphery in the late seventeenth century would ultimately have a positive impact, the economic character of the seventeenth century itself is one of excessive extraction and a mishandling of the available resources. This is particularly the case in Seville.

The economic condition of Seville was subject to its own pressures and dynamics. A crucial factor was trade with the New World, which in the sixteenth century had led to a demographic surge and the expansion and development of Seville's urban space. The transatlantic silver trade saw the establishment of a wealthy mercantile group in the city, who lived in

[5] Storrs, *Resilience of the Spanish Monarchy*, pp. 107 and 123.
[6] José Ignacio Andrés Ucendo, *La fiscalidad en Castilla en el siglo XVII: Los servicios de millones, 1601-1700* (Bilbao, 1999), pp. 11 and 159 and Ildefonso Pulido Bueno, *Consumo y fiscalidad en el reino de Sevilla: el servicio de millones en el siglo XVII* (Seville, 1984).
[7] Yun Casalilla, 'Del centro a la periferia', pp. 61-2, 65 and 67.

luxurious townhouses alongside the pre-existing *sevillano* nobility.[8] Seville's artisans and craftspeople consequently directed their efforts mainly towards satisfying increased local demand for luxuries, rather than participating in wider opportunities opened up by Seville entering into a growing 'global' market, lacking the productive capacity to penetrate the latter.[9] More large-scale local industry included the production of silk, ceramic pottery, soap, and gunpowder. The latter three were centred on the extra-mural, cross-river district of Triana, where pollutants produced by the workshops and factories of such industries could be more easily disposed of, at a greater distance from the noble townhouses and knotted neighbourhoods of the walled city.[10] Inside the walls shopkeepers predominated, and the rhythm of urban life was set by the markets such as those at Plaza de San Francisco and on Calle Feria. Thanks to a large, mobile population of sailors and dockworkers, the *bodegones* and taverns of the city rarely struggled to find customers. The trade with the Indies initially dictated the pace of seventeenth-century Seville's economic life, even as the scale of this activity declined (perhaps three and a half million *pesos* of bullion entered Spain in 1656-60, compared to seventeen million in 1631-5 and thirty-five million in 1591-5), but as the century progressed Cádiz was increasingly used to unload the American cargo, a situation which the monarchy made official by ordering all ships to unload and load there in 1680.[11]

Until 1680, the arrival of ships at the dock area of El Arenal and their subsequent unloading and loading required substantial manpower, providing a stimulus for urban migration at the prospect of employment. As the population of the city increased, so too did urban poverty.[12] The nature and extent of the city's impoverished population can be approached from a report compiled in 1667, the findings of which suggested that, whilst widespread, poverty was particularly serious in the district of Triana (a spatial imbalance of urban suffering that will

[8] Some of their connections to the city's politics are explored in José Manuel Díaz Blanco, *Así trocaste tu Gloria. Guerra y comercio colonial en le España del siglo XVII* (Valladolid, 2012).
[9] Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, p. 131.
[10] Díaz Garrido, *Triana y la orilla derecha del Guadalquivir*, pp. 196-202.
[11] Kamen, *Spain in the Later Seventeenth Century*, pp. 131-5.
[12] For Seville's population see the Introduction, p. 25.

become even more apparent when we examine the flooding of the Guadalquivir).[13] A further survey in 1675 found that the majority of the beggars in the city were old men, but Juan Ignacio Carmona has shown that it was not possible to predict who might fall into need, as sudden losses (of family members, shipping, goods, property) could drive even nobles below the line of subsistence.[14] At the other end of the spectrum, the city's rich comprised both a pre-existing elite whose wealth came from Andalusian estates and a new mercantile community that consisted of both international traders and merchants from the other kingdoms of Spain.[15] This mercantile group remained influential in the city beyond even the formal relocation of the management of the transatlantic trade to Cádiz in 1717. Their presence encouraged specialist luxury industries and artistic production.[16] Art was also commissioned by the high number of religious communities based in Seville, and the participation of these religious institutions – including monasteries and convents, parish churches and the archdiocese – in the wider economic activity of the city also gave stimulus to local artisans and craftspeople.[17]

The *asistente*'s role in managing the local economy was direct and hands-on, perhaps surprisingly so given the range of other tasks assigned to his office. First and foremost, he had to issue and then enforce, as far as possible, royal mandates regulating the economic life of the city. In October 1627 the count of Puebla del Maestre issued, following a royal order of the previous month, an exhaustive list of maximum prices that the city's traders were permitted to charge, covering every vendible material or product.[18] Whilst the *asistente* himself had not decided the prices in this instance (that had been done by men appointed by the king for their 'celo y

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[13] The report was compiled the notable *sevillano* philanthropist Miguel Mañara (1627-79). See Juan de Cárdenas, *Breue relacion de la muerte, vida y virtudes del venerable cauallero D. Miguel Mañara Vicentelo de Leca…* (Seville, 1679).
[14] Widowed noblewomen were particularly vulnerable. See Carmona, *El extenso mundo de la pobreza*, pp. 28-9, 40 and 53.
[15] There was a substantial Basque presence in the city, for example. See Fernando Fernández González, *Comerciantes Vascos en Sevilla 1650-1700* (Seville, 2001), p. 288.
[16] See Fernando Quiles García, 'El arte en un emporio mercantil, la Sevilla barroca', *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas*, 43 (2006), pp. 67-9.
[17] See, for example, Zurbarán's *San Hugo en el Refectorio* (1665), commissioned by the Carthusian Monastery of Santa Maria de las Cuevas, on the island of La Cartuja (in the Guadalquivir River, immediately to the north of the city).
[18] *Tassa general de los precios a que se an de vender las mercaderias en esta Ciudad de Sevilla y su tierra: y de las hechuras, salarios, y jornales, y demas cosas, contenidas en esta Relacion, que se a hecho, por el Señor Conde de la Puebla, Marques de Vacares, Assistente desta dicha Ciudad* (1627), BCC 26-8-29.

inteligencia', and supposedly free from economic interests that might be impacted by the price-setting), on other occasions the *asistente* worked with the city council to formulate and then promulgate new laws and regulations more specific to Seville, or to decide prices.[19] Such was the case in 1629 when Diego Hurtado de Mendoza issued a *bando* (edict) that included a number of laws for the conduct of economic activity in the city.[20] Many of these related to the *bodegones* and taverns of the city, directives in which the intent was to regulate morals, law and order as much as business. Taverns were ordered, for example, to refuse their services to 'personas suspechosas', prostitutes, thieves, and vagabonds, and could not buy slaves. They were also prohibited from serving married men from Seville, as the authorities saw them as places where they could monitor foreigners and visitors but also control adultery and the wider morality of the city as a whole. Individuals looking to found a new *bodegón* or tavern were required to have a licence, issued by the *asistente* himself, and there was a punishment of six hundred *maravedís* for not possessing one.[21] Such fines (the vast majority of prescribed punishments in the *bando* are fines) marked an opportunity for the city council to add to its treasury, arguably exploiting the proliferation of taverns, inns, and *bodegones* in the city. Other directives were more concerned with quality control. For example, clothes vendors were forbidden from buying and selling-on items sold at auction, and could not sell an item without it first having hung for ten days (to prevent the quick reselling of defective product or the spread of disease).[22] The *asistente* himself, or at least his *tenientes*, would physically visit the places and spaces of economic activity in Seville, not only to check for infractions of royal legislation, but also to consider solutions for flagging industries. This was the case in 1679, when the *asistente* at that time, Manuel Girón y Salcedo, the marquis of Sofraga, visited the Alcaicería (the street where silk was traditionally sold) in person, to confront the issue of its declining trade. A thorough survey of the street was taken, noting all the shops and what they sold, the names of their owners, and the presence of

[19] This power was quite usual in other parts of Spain and western Europe: see for example J.I. Andrés Ucendo and Ramón Lanza García, 'El abasto de pan en el Madrid del siglo XVII', *Studia historica: Historia Moderna*, 34 (2012), pp. 61-97.
[20] *Bando de 1629, dictado por el Asistente D. Diego Hurtado de Mendoza*, AMS XI (folio).37.13, fo. 127r-132r.
[21] Ibid., fo. 127v and 129v.
[22] Ibid., fo. 128v.

vacant lots. Although the steps taken to combat the decline are not recorded, what should be emphasised is the physical entry of the *asistente* into specific neighbourhoods, and the range of individuals he came into contact with.[23] Not a faceless legislator, the *asistente* was a visible and assertive factor in the economic life of the city, engaging with and confronting real issues affecting industry and business. Urban government, even for a royal official with an extensive legal brief and a responsibility to symbolise and enact the authority of the king, was direct and hands-on.

The economic life of the city was vulnerable to exogenous shocks. The susceptibility of the city to the environment and disaster will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters, but cold winters could cripple harvests, driving up the price of bread, and floods could destroy supplies, livestock and livelihoods. Plague, most seriously in 1649, also had enormous financial implications for the city. Regular economic activity, such as everyday trade with the urban hinterland or the use of the river for commerce, was completely suspended whilst a plague quarantine cordon was in effect. Additionally, the reduced population following a plague meant that the city's tax contributions necessarily fell. Flood destroyed livestock, produce and trade goods, damaged property, and also disrupted regular means of communication. Not a natural phenomenon, but no-less important, was the impact of war with Portugal, which I look at below. These shocks were the context in which tax collection was undertaken. The need for royal officials to satisfy the crown's financial requirements was set alongside these very real threats, anxieties and pressures, which the city government worked with the *asistentes* to contain. Too often, taxation is analysed in the abstract, a series of figures and dates, the connection to real lives and places made only loosely, indirectly.

The *asistente* was sporadically called on to oversee the administration and collection of royal taxation. The extent to which *asistentes* had to carry out this function varied over time, in line with royal fiscal acquisitiveness (peaking in the reign of Philip IV before declining in Charles II's reign). When called upon to collect a tax, however, the *asistentes* frequently found their

[23] The survey is reproduced in Antonio Dominguez Ortíz, 'La Alcaicería de la Seda de Sevilla en 1679', in his *Sociedad y mentalidad en la Sevilla del Antiguo régimen* (Seville, 1983), pp. 61-7.

authority challenged and diminished by the *ad hoc* appointment of special tax collectors appointed by the crown. Attempting to gain a general overview of taxation in seventeenth-century Spain can be bewildering. The main taxes were the *alcabala*, a 10% tax on sales, the *cientos*, a 4% levy on top of the *alcabala* (which decreased to 2% in 1686 after its introduction in 1639), the *servicios ordinarios y extraordinarios*, a fixed-sum levy on households in Castile, and the *almojarifazgos*, customs duties levied on importers and exporters, of which the most important was the *almojarifazgo mayor*, levied in Seville.[24] The *asistente* was normally not required to get involved in the collection of these ordinary revenue streams for the royal treasury. They were, however, called on when the king asked for the payment of *millones* by the cities of Castile. City councils, under the direction of their *corregidor* (or *asistente* in Seville's case), would create a local commission of at least two individuals for the management of the tax collection, from which point there was flexibility in how the money might be raised. The most common method was a temporary tariff on a specific consumer good, such as meat, but other means included charging rent on common lands owned by the municipality (such as land for pasture), or by asking for direct contributions from specific individuals (urban officials might have a percentage of their salary appropriated for this purpose, for example).[25]

At the start of my period of study, in the 1620s, the city council was largely left to itself to appoint *diputados* (commissioners) and manage the *millones* payments.[26] From 1632 onwards, however, the crown gained new powers to control tax collection from concessions by the *Cortes* of that year, for example obtaining the ability to appoint its own administrators who took precedence over the city's authority.[27] Seville was particularly vulnerable to these intrusions because of its vital fiscal role. Andalusia was the most important region for the crown's finances,

[24] Kamen, *Spain in the Later Seventeenth Century*, p. 359.
[25] Ucendo, *La fiscalidad en Castilla*, pp. 11 and 43 and his article, 'Castile's Tax System in the Seventeenth Century', *Journal of European Economic History*, 30:3 (2001), pp. 597-617. Of these, a tax on foodstuffs was risky because of potential destabilisation in local food markets, but could be attractive to city councils as it took the burden off the political elite and placed it on the less wealthy consumer. See Hernández, *A la sombra de la Corona*, p. 40.
[26] See for example the regular meeting of the city council on 5 January 1626. At this meeting a secret vote was held to appoint a scribe for the *millones*. The influence of scribes in urban government should not be underestimated, and great care was taken in their appointment. AMS X, H/1637, libro 37, 1a Escribanía (1).
[27] Ucendo, *La fiscalidad en Castilla*, p. 55. For the Cortes, see p. 18 of this thesis.

the territory of Seville was the most significant territory of the kingdom, and Seville itself was largely responsible for this. That Andalusia contributed 45% of the total amount received by the crown for the years 1640-4 (reduced to 35% in 1695-1700, following the loss of population in Seville) demonstrates the crucial role of the city in royal financial planning.[28] In 1633, for example, the *Consejo de Hacienda* appointed Manuel Pantoja to oversee the *millones* of Seville, who instantly ran into the opposition of a recalcitrant city council, concerned, as in other matters, to guard its rights and privileges. Although the crown imposed its will on this occasion, further disagreements in 1641, 1648, and 1669 all failed to solve the jurisdictional issues. New appointments, as Fortea Pérez has argued, complicated an already complex jurisdictional situation and created problems of 'pre-eminence' that compromised the work of the *asistente*.[29] Although the task for Seville's urban government was simplified after 1632 by the designation of *tesorerías*, areas given the jurisdiction to manage their own payments of the *millones* (larger towns usually under Seville's jurisdiction such as Carmona, Marchena and Sanlúcar de Barremeda were granted *tesorerías* for example), the semi-improvised and *ad hoc* nature of the collection of the *millones*, combined with the profusion of jurisdictions, made the task convoluted and the process could drag on for several years after the royal request for a contribution.[30]

New 'extraordinary' requests from the crown were met in similarly disjointed fashion. *Donativos* were special contributions demanded by the crown, almost always to help fund military conflicts. As with the *millones*, there was flexibility in what form the contribution might take, but an extra complication was that the *donativos* were a way in which local communities and individual economic or social agents would negotiate favours from the royal tax collector in return for contributions, for example guarantees of preferment for appointments or trade protection. The task of raising *donativos* often fell on the *asistentes*; they received the contributions then sent them to where they had been allocated. Yet the city council had to vote to appoint officials to help in the collection, a matter on which the council and *asistente* argued in 1671, when the count of Lences as *asistente* insisted that the official should be paid a salary, but

[28] Ucendo, *La fiscalidad en Castilla*, pp. 160-2 (and pp. 187-9 for full tables of Seville's contributions).
[29] Ibid., p. 61 and Fortea Pérez, '"Príncipes de la república"', pp. 78-81.
[30] Bueno, *Consumo y fiscalidad*, pp. 26-7.

the council demurred. The council eventually acceded to the *asistente*'s wish, but then appointed individuals who were already provided with a salary, claiming that the pre-existing payment also covered the new responsibilities in respect to the *donativo*.[31] Additionally, the city's residents were reluctant to contribute to the 1671 *donativo*. A duty imposed on meat initially applied only to cuts bought from sellers in the city; in response meat started to be sold outside the city walls, thus avoiding the tax. The city council then had to apply to the crown (who had to approve the means by which the *donativo* was collected) to extend the tariff to embrace the area around the city.[32] There were real spatial considerations when collecting royal taxation, demanding an understanding of how jurisdictional terminology was mapped onto urban space. The *asistente* had to factor in these considerations.

The complexities of this process again often led the crown to appoint special administrators to handle collections of *donativos* for a specific area, again adding confusion to jurisdictional boundaries. Those who had previously served as *asistente* could find themselves appointed to such a role for other districts, where they would be required to put their skills of compromise and negotiation, refined in Seville, to the test. This was the position of Fernando Ramírez Fariñas in 1629, commissioned to collect a donativo for the archbishopric of Toledo and the province of Guadalajara, having been *asistente* in 1623-6.[33] Whilst acting as *asistente*, such interventions in the local political and economic environment by other royal officials with a specific agenda were likely a cause for anxiety. Although it has been pointed out above that the demands for direct taxation were lessened in the reign of Charles II, the problems of a plurality of jurisdictions on economic issues in the city persisted throughout the entire seventeenth century. I detailed in Chapter 1 how in 1694, Castillo de Bobadilla's *Política para corregidores* was used in a legal argument over a tax on the sale of ice in the city (see above p. 58). The *asistente*, the count of Valdeaguila, argued against the imposition of a tax on a fifth of sales, citing environmental

[31] An incident described in Manuel Escalona Jiménez, 'Los donativos de la ciudad de Sevilla durante el reinado de Carlos II', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie IV: Historia Moderna*, 11 (1998), pp. 298-9.
[32] Ibid., p. 290.
[33] Ramón Lanza García, 'El donativo de 1629 en el distrito de Fernando Ramírez Fariñas', *IX Congreso de la Asociación Española de Historia Económica, "Estado fiscal" y depresión económica en la España de los Austrias* (Murcia, 2008), pp. 1-37.

reasons that the tax would be harmful – that ice was a more basic product in Seville than in other cities due to the heat, and that this tax would hurt the poor.[34] That the *asistente* was on the city's side in this debate is a reminder that despite being royal appointees, carrying out urban government might require them to argue and work against the immediate royal interest. Across the century, the *asistentes* of Seville were engaged in balancing royal demands and the interference of royal agents against local economic and environmental conditions. Their job required firm communication, direct action, and local knowledge. They were no mere bureaucratic cipher but instead did hands-on work in the urban environment, working to satisfy the royal need for tax. Equally, the demands of warfare on Seville required a comparable balancing act from the *asistente*.

War was one of the (if not the most) central concerns of the early modern Spanish crown, giving impetus to its efforts concerning tax collection, defining its economic policies, and seemingly inextricably bound to its understanding of its own power. The *asistente* had no explicitly defined military responsibilities, reflecting the wider formulation of the position of *corregidor*. Bobadilla had pointed out that even in frontier or coastal *corregimientos*, at potential risk of attack, the office should be concerned more with '[la] administracion de justicia, que de guerra'.[35] Yet in Seville the situation was often complicated by the *asistente*'s simultaneously holding the title of *maestre de campo*, and until the time of the count-duke of Olivares, the title of *capitán general*, both which granted them military authority across the entire territory of Seville.[36] The rank of *maestre de campo* gave the *asistente* authority to command infantry and regulate the food supply for military purposes. Many of the visible signs of Seville's military function were obsolete long before the seventeenth century. The Castillo de Triana had guarded the western approach to the city, but had been the headquarters of the city's inquisitorial tribunal from 1492 until its physical deterioration prompted their relocation across the river between 1626 and 1639, whilst the city

[34] *Competencia…,* AMS XII.1.27, fo. 211r.
[35] Bobadilla, *Política*, 1.1.10, p. 151.
[36] Olivares took the title of *capitán general* for himself, but it did not return to the *asistentes* on his death in 1645. *Cathalogo de los assistentes*, fo. 1r-v.

walls, as will be seen, defended the city less against human enemies than the violent surges of the Guadalquivir River.[37] The city remained important militarily, however: as a source of manpower and (particularly during the mid-century) as a strategic staging post on the way to the Portuguese front.

War had a heavy impact on seventeenth-century Seville. Antonio Domínguez Ortiz argued that the outbreak of the Portuguese Restoration War in 1640 was a serious turning point for the worse in Seville's history, as it committed Seville to sending militia forces (raised in *ad hoc* fashion, much as with the collection of special taxes) to the Portuguese border, adding financial and human burdens.[38] Although irregular, these burdens were onerous. The *Annales* of Ortiz de Zúñiga emphasise the impact of the war. Describing the start of the conflict, he presages future events by warning that the war would have 'gravissimas consequencias, y muy perniciosas para la Andaluzia, y Sevilla'.[39] Entries for the subsequent years of conflict bear out this warning. In 1643, an effort to relieve the siege of the town of Villanueva del Fresno Badajoz was financially 'costosissimos' for the city, as a large number of cavalrymen recruited from the city's nobility were sent to the front, but never saw action.[40] The burdens lightened in the years immediately after the ravaging of the city by plague in 1649, but picked up again in the mid-1650s. In 1657, for example, the city was required to send four *tercios* to Badajoz (each *tercio* was a three thousand strong infantry unit of pikemen, swordsmen and crossbowmen), and the war 'proseguiase con ardor' in 1658, despite a harsh winter that saw grain supplies failing and men dying of the cold and hunger, 'cosas pocas vezes vista en Andaluzia'.[41] Later years saw a further synergy between human and natural challenges on the city, as in 1663 a flood led to 'terribles molestias', which already had to cope with the extra stress of providing native troops and billeting foreign ones.[42] On the conclusion of a peace in 1668, Ortiz de Zúñiga emphasised the relief this offered to Seville rather than the broader context of a defeat for the Habsburg forces:

[37] Díaz Garrido, *Triana y la orilla derecha del Guadalquivir*, p. 202.
[38] Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla*, pp. 22-3.
[39] Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales*, p. 668.
[40] Ibid., p. 702.
[41] Ibid., p. 759.
[42] Ibid., p. 775.

> Firmòse al fin la paz con Portugal, en Madrid à 23 de Febrero del año de 1668, y publicòse en Seuilla poco despues, à que, y à su tierra se presumia el mayor de sus aliuios, que por espacio de 27 años auia sufrido los mas de su peso, y lleuado gran parte de sus infortunios, con increibles muestras de su fineza, lealtad, y constancia.[43]

War was one of the most direct ways in which the crown placed additional strain upon the city. These new burdens frequently made the environmental challenges the city was also facing more acute. As the most senior royal official in the city, the *asistente* was implicated in the heightened tensions between the centre and the periphery that were the inevitable result.

The military tasks that required the *asistente*'s involvement varied. At one extreme, an *asistente* might have to lead troops to the front himself, such as during the attempted relief of Villanueva del Fresno in 1643, when the count of Puebla del Maestre went out 'en persona' with the militia (he did not see action, being ordered to wait at the town of Fregenal).[44] Such direct military leadership was rare however. The job of raising troops fell on the *asistente* with much greater regularity, especially at the start of the conflict with Portugal. García Sarmiento de Sotomayor, count of Salvatierra, *asistente* from 1634-42, faced three separate orders to raise troops in just over a year, in January and September 1641 and March 1642. In response to the last of these requests, the city council protested that in the previous eight years it had had to supply eleven thousand troops for various conflicts.[45] At times this levying resulted in the *asistente*'s having to bear some of the financial costs personally. In 1651, the marquis of Avilafuente wrote to the king, requesting remuneration for costs accrued raising troops around Malaga and Granada, demonstrating the lengths to which an *asistente* might have to go to satisfy royal orders whilst not putting undue strain on the resources of Seville itself.[46] The *asistente* also had to deal with a city in a heightened state of anxiety, certainly in the early 1640s. When it became clear that the king

[43] Ibid., p. 781. For how the Spanish monarchy recruited and mobilised troops for different fronts, see Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, 1567-1659: The Logistics of Spanish Victory and Defeat in the Low Countries' Wars* (Cambridge ,2004), pp. 21-41. For the recuitment of townspeople more specifically see Mackay, *Limits of Royal Authority*, pp. 61-98.
[44] Ibid., p. 701.
[45] City council to *Consejo de Castilla* 25 March 1642, *Actas del Cabildo de caballeros [de Sevilla], 1640-8*, BN MSS 13350, fo. 4. See fo. 12 and 14 for the requests of 1641. Salvatierra was also given the authority to requisition arms from the city in 1640, and was asked to lead troops himself in 1641. The latter order surprised him, indicating its unusualness. Luis Salas Almela (tr. Ruth Mackay), *Conspiracy of the Ninth Duke of Medina Sidonia (1641): An Aristocrat in the Crisis of the Spanish Empire* (Leiden, 2013), pp. 66 and 84.
[46] Marquis of Avilafuente to *Real Cámara*, 1651, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 31.

was going to appoint the count of Salvatierra to his council in spring 1642, and so draw him away from Seville, the city council responded in a letter of 8 April that leaving the city 'sin cabeça' at this time would cause 'ynconbenientes tan grandes', and they urged Philip IV to reconsider.[47] The city council used the opportunity to raise with the king more specific problems in the city caused by the war with Portugal, revealing wider discontent with the implications of the conflict. The war, the city council argued, was leaving the city 'desamparada de su nobleça' and the frequency of militia levies had left it with a 'falta de naturales'. The international character of Seville's population became a worry during wartime, and the city council drew attention to both the number of Portuguese traders and armed Portuguese guards working in the city. Rumours of unrest and even revolt in the Spanish empire had reached the city, and the city council was clearly on edge about potential violence in Seville itself.[48] Another context is the failed conspiracy by the ninth duke of Medina Sidonia (a grandee with vast estates in Andalusia and seigneurial jurisdiction of the important port town of Sanlúcar) in 1641, for which there may have been some sympathy among Seville's political elite.[49] Although these initial fears were misplaced, it is perhaps unsurprising that the riot of 1652 occurred at a moment when war combined with environmental pressures.

It is in this context that the city council took issue with the *asistente* when he carried a military symbol of authority into the council chamber in 1663. When Pedro Mesía de Tobar, the count of Molina (1614-64, previously a member of the *Consejo de Hacienda* and before that an infantry commander, and *asistente* 1662-4), first entered the city council to take up the office of *asistente* in January, having been appointed in December the previous year, he did so carrying the *bastón* (military baton) as his symbol of office, as well the *vara de justicia* (rod of justice).[50] The city council, led by the then *procurador mayor* (the city council's main lawyer), Gonzalo

[47] City council to *Consejo de Castilla* 8 April 1642, *Actas del Cabildo*, BN MSS 13350, fo. 6r.
[48] Ibid., fo. 6r-7v. There were rumours of a massacre of three thousand Castilians at Cartagena in the Caribbean by Portuguese, and New Spain feared a Portuguese insurrection. See Jonathan Israel, *Empires and entrepots: the Dutch, the Spanish monarchy and the Jews, 1585-1713* (London, 1990), p. 313.
[49] In his study of this conspiracy, Luis Sala Almela says he could not find any direct evidence linking municipal figures of Seville with the conspiracy, but some contemporaries were sure of a connection. Almela, *Conspiracy of the Ninth Duke of Medina Sidonia*, p. 99.
[50] *Defensa del asistente de Sevilla, sobre uso de baston en lugar de vara de justicia: 1663*, AMS Sección XI (folio).37.22, fo. 225r.

Saavedra de Monsalve, argued the city had a 'preeminencia' (privilege) that the *asistente* should carry or wear only the *vara de justicia* into their chamber, and not the *bastón*.[51] The city council's objections stemmed from their perception of the symbolism of the *bastón* and the boost it gave to the *asistente*'s authority, particularly by emphasising his military leadership. The *teniente mayor* to the *asistente* wrote an initial rebuttal of the city's arguments and, to settle the dispute, a lawyer from the *Real Audiencia* was tasked with adjudicating between both positions. The royally appointed lawyer settled on the side of the *asistente*, the king's governor. Although we have seen the persistent tensions and enmity that could develop between the *Audiencia* and the office of *asistente*, it was not in the interests of the *Audiencia* to protect the perceived rights of the city at the expense of the powers and privileges of royal officials. There were also sound legal grounds on which the complaints of the city council could be rebutted. The record of the *Audiencia*'s arguments exists in printed form in the AMS, alongside those previously expressed by the *teniente mayor*. The city council's arguments are recorded second-hand in these documents, its original complaint to the king having been lost. The arguments deployed reveal how power in the city's central institutions was understood and negotiated. Symbols, and the performance of office, were issues over which the city might resist the crown and seek to restate urban privileges.

The city council knew that the *bastón* was interpreted not only as a military symbol, but a symbol that more closely corresponded to royal and imperial power. The *Audiencia*'s lawyer, Licenciado Juan Márquez de Cuenca y Mescua, noted that the *bastón*, originating in the Roman Empire, represented the emperor's 'persona, y Cetro' and was correspondingly the 'insignia preeminente, de mas honor, y mayor consequencia' than the *vara*.[52] This extra symbolic impetus had a practical outcome: soldiers respected the officer carrying the *bastón*, but it was a cause for 'ignominia' for them to be punished by someone wielding only the *vara*.[53] Initially, the *teniente,* Juan Ignacio de Truxillo, had tried to mollify the city council by insisting that the two aspects to

[51] Precedence was a near-universal concern in early modern European politics, which connected politics conducted in the urban context with international diplomatic affairs. See Liesbeth Geevers, 'The Conquistador and the Phoenix: the Franco-Spanish Precedence Dispute (1564-1610)', *The International History Review*, 35:1 (2013), pp. 23-41.
[52] *Defensa del asistente*, fo. 240r.
[53] Ibid., fo. 241r.

the *asistente*'s authority were of equal standing and that both 'debe considerar principal', arguing that arms and letters were of 'reciproca necessidad' for the preservation of a republic.[54] The greater bullishness of the king's lawyer reflects the monarchy's concern to have its own power clearly articulated, whilst the *asistente*'s office adopted a more placatory stance. The *teniente* did, however, also insist on the practical impact of the use of the *bastón* in a time of war; the authority and symbolic power it gave him 'son muy necessarias para moderar los excessos que los Soldados fuelen cometer en los alojamientos, y transitos'.[55] Although more needs to be known about the behaviour of billeted troops in Seville at this time, it was clearly of concern to the *asistente*'s office.

Regardless of the practical value to the *bastón*, it was a point of precedent that firmly decided the issue in favour of the *asistente* and his continued use of the military insignia. The precedent deployed was not in the distant past, some obscure medieval discovery, but referred to the tenure of the previous *asistente*, the count of Villaumbrosa. Truxillo described how Molina, in his immediate response to the city council's objections, noted that Villaumbrosa had used the insignia of the *bastón* and that 'si la Ciudad tenia la preeminnencia que elegava, era necessario Privilegio, y Cedula de se Magestad, que devia exhibirla'.[56] Truxillo developed the point further in his argument; Villaumbrosa had used the *bastón* right up until the day he left his office (indeed nearly all the councilmen themselves were eyewitnesses to this), and as Molina was taking up the same positions there had been no appropriation or seizure of any new symbols or powers.[57] The lawyer of the *Real Audiencia* hammered the point home, initially quoting from Diego de Saavedra Fajardo (a Spanish diplomat and humanist, 1584-1648) – 'son leyes no escritas en el papel, sino en el animo, y memoria de todos' – before arguing that if the custom had developed of the *asistente* entering with the *bastón*, 'no es dudable que se adquirio derecho, y privilegio especial de jurisdicion, para quel el sucesor en dichos oficios pueda entrar con el [*bastón*]'.[58] As

[54] Ibid., fo. 231r-232v.
[55] Ibid., fo. 231v.
[56] Ibid., fo. 225r.
[57] Ibid., fo. 227r-v.
[58] Ibid., fo. 248r-v. Fajardo's most widely read work was his *Idea de un príncipe político cristiano: representada en cien empresas* (Milan, 1640), an anti-Machiavellian treatise on being a Christian Prince.

Villaumbrosa had used it for ten years a custom had been established, and Mescua further argued that the city council, having not sought to prevent the *bastón*'s usage then, could not justifiably do so now. Their previous silence was evidence of tacit consent, and their objections were brushed aside as Mescua found in the *asistente's* favour.

Given the previous usage of the *bastón* by Villaumbrosa, it is perhaps worth questioning the city council's motives in raising objections to Molina's entry with the same insignia. They may have understood the military situation during Villaumbrosa's tenure as exceptional, realising too late that the reinforced royal symbolism – a necessary instrument of military control (one which the city council may have welcomed in 1640 given their fears over the conflict) – was there to stay. Mescua had rebutted the suggestion that as the military front was further away from Seville in 1663 than it had previously been, the *bastón* was less necessary; it might be inferred therefore that the city council had seen the *asistente*'s increased military aspect as a temporary expedient.[59] Another possible explanation relates to a further aspect of the tenure of the count of Villaumbrosa: its unusual length. At just under ten years (1653-62), Villaumbrosa's term as *asistente* was by far the longest in the period 1621-1700, reflecting the crown's concern to bring stability to the city's governance after the traumatic period from the outbreak of war in 1640 to the riots of 1652. (See pp. 95-6) The city council's objections were perhaps a way of showing the new appointee that he would not have an easy time: a reminder of how power relationships in early modern Spain underwent a near continual process of renegotiation.

War greatly complicated the role of a number of *asistentes*, particularly in the mid-century. Their military duties could be onerous based on the proximity and severity of the conflict, but they were often assigned on an *ad hoc* basis, despite their also possessing the parallel title of *maestre del campo*. Indeed, the symbols of that office were a bone of contention with a city council understandably fearful of war's implications, but especially in relation to the preservation of their own authority. In the broader context of the human costs of waging a war, simultaneous to the climate and natural environment posing ever greater challenges (both at the urban and national level), arguments over such matters as the *bastón* were arguably an unhelpful distraction.

[59] *Defensa del asistente*, fo. 250r.

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ii. Matters of life and death: the asistente*, food supply and plague*

Food supply was a central issue of urban government. Braudel observed that 'in the Spanish literature of the Golden Age an empty stomach is a familiar character' and the climatic changes of seventeenth-century Europe posed particular challenges in a Mediterranean environment where harvests were 'at the mercy of unstable elements' to a greater degree than in other local conditions.[60] Meanwhile, cities were particularly vulnerable to the consequences of a food shortage amidst other pressures stretching their economic and indeed spatial limits; over-taxation and overcrowding led to hunger, increasing the susceptibility of residents to plague and other hardships.[61] The challenges local communities faced in ensuring they had enough food were well known to Spain's rulers. Philip II received correspondence from across the realm that gave detailed information on the levels of rainfall after the planting of crops, and running updates on the price of bread.[62] Philip IV meanwhile was warned by a minister that 'hunger is the greatest enemy', liable to encourage open, violent opposition in cities if present.[63] There was good reason for these warnings. Philip IV's advisers were most worried about Madrid, and although during his reign the city remained placid, towards the end of Charles II's reign in 1699 a riot over high bread prices broke out that was only calmed by the intervention of the king in person. Issues over the supply and price of basic foodstuffs could prompt the direct intervention of the town's *vecinos* into urban politics, threatening urban governors.[64] As we have seen, food shortages could lead to similar public anger in Seville. The riot of 1652 took place after royal tampering with the value of the coinage had caused bread prices to soar, in a wider context of declining harvests across

[60] Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, pp. 242-3.
[61] Parker, *Global Crisis*, p. 56.
[62] Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, p. 244.
[63] Parker, *Global Crisis*, p. 55.
[64] Juan Antonio González Pañero and José Antolín Nieto Sánchez, 'El conflicto social en el Madrid del siglo XVII', in Francisco Javier Guillamón Álvarez and José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez (eds.), *Lo conflictivo y lo consensual en Castilla. Sociedad y poder político, 1521-1750* (Murcia, 2001), pp. 381-3 and 399.

Andalusia. The main action of the *asistente* during that riot was to attempt to secure a supply of bread from neighbouring towns, believing that desperate hunger was what had tipped sedition into popular violence (see p. 96). An appreciation of the importance of food supply remained at the forefront of the minds of members of the *Cámara* after the 1652 riot, as they suggested potential appointees to the post to the king. In 1664, a note from the *Cámara*, advising the king that a new *asistente* needed to be appointed after the death of the count of Molina, suggested that someone with great experience should get the job, due to the city's problems with the food supply.[65]

The *asistente* therefore had many duties relating to food supply and regulating the sale of food in the city, as did the other *corregidores* across Castile. Lunenfeld has argued that 'the role of the *corregidor*, at least in terms of food supply, was actually quite positive. Officials attempted to restrain the price of grain under local regulations, while maintaining stocks for emergency use.'[66] Lunenfeld's surprise is unnecessary. Taking care of food supply was a matter of self-preservation for royal agents in Castile's early modern cities. Contemporaries were well aware of the importance of keeping the people fed and this is reflected in what guidelines and directives for the position existed. The third chapter of the third book of Bobadilla's *Política para corregidores* is given over to emphasising the vital importance of guarding a city's bread supply, as a key part of a *corregidor*'s (and hence *asistente*'s) charge. Without food, without bread, a city's population would lose its respect for the law, its fear of God, its obedience to its king: 'el pueblo hambriento no sabe temer'.[67] Bobadilla connected the *corregidores*' role in this respect to his familial understanding of the post: 'porque assi como a los padres toca alimentar a sus hijos, assi a los Corregidores, que son llamados padres de la Republica, toca alimentar a los vezinos'.[68] He pointed out how the *Capítulos de corregidores* from 1500 asserted the importance of keeping the *pósitos de pan* – public grain reserve storehouses – well-stocked. The 1648 update of the *Capítulos* re-emphasised the importance of this task, in a reflection of the anxiety of the ministers

[65] *Real Cámara* to Philip IV 21 July 1664, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 39.
[66] Lunenfeld, *Keepers of the City*, p. 155.
[67] Bobadilla, *Política*, 2.3.3, p. 25.
[68] Ibid., p. 26.

who advised Philip IV on the dangers of widespread hunger.[69] Bobadilla added extra duties: ensuring the storehouses maintained their integrity, and that the grain was not sold to councilmen or used for profit, and making sure that public debts owed in bread were not paid in cash in times of food shortage.[70] It is clear from Bobadilla's chapter how vital a consideration the supply of bread to a city was, and how involved *corregidores* should be in its administration. In Seville, these considerations were most clear during and after flood, when providing the stranded or dislocated with food was one of the first priorities (see pp. 219-20).

There were other matters pertaining to food that the *asistente* dealt with. The 1629 *bando* issued by then *asistente* Diego Hurtado de Mendoza contained many directives on the sale and storage of food in the city.[71] These instructions ranged from trying to manage the spaces and places in which certain foodstuffs could be sold to specific hygiene instructions on certain goods. Bread sellers, for example, were ordered to conduct business only in plazas and not in streets (where they would suffer a confiscation of their product and an additional fine), whilst bakeries had to display their prices on wooden boards placed outside the premises. Both of these instructions would have made it easier, in theory, for the city council to monitor and regulate the sale of bread. There were also specific cleanliness and hygiene recommendations for bakers; it was forbidden, for example, to keep chickens or poultry on their premises.[72] Trade in other foodstuffs was subject to similar regulation. Fish vendors had to display their prices clearly on wooden boards, and were directed to sell their product by the bridge to Triana.[73] Previously, fish had been sold in the Plaza de San Francisco, where by the seventeenth century both the city council and the *Real Audiencia* had their buildings. The change from selling at this central, increasingly civic location, to a space at the edge of the urban centre of walled Seville might reflect a desire to spatially marginalise economic activity that could produce a foul smell, and cultivate an urban environment in which orderly, clean spaces were associated with the presence of civic institutions. For the city government (led by the *asistente*) keeping Seville's food supply

[69] Alonso, *El corregidor castellano*, p. 319.
[70] Bobadilla, *Política*, 2.3.3, pp. 28-54.
[71] *Bando de 1629*, fo. 127r-132r.
[72] Ibid., fo. 128r and 130r.
[73] Ibid., fo. 130r-v.

under control also meant defining limits to the spatial operation of economic activity. Yet as Ignacio Carmona has emphasised, a flurry of legislation does not mean that the city council were successful in enforcing new laws.[74]

The city council and *asistente* took an even more active role in monitoring the sale of meat in the city. Meat remained the central component in the meals of even poorer families. Only the quality and cut of the meat, rather than its presence, varied between social classes.[75] The city council only allowed the sale of meat prepared at the city's slaughterhouse – the *matadero* – which was situated just outside the city walls to the northeast, near the accordingly named Puerta de Carne. To ensure quality control the council employed an *alcalde del matadero*, who was to give daily reports to the *asistente* or an *alcalde* of the *Real Audiencia* that he had observed the slaughter of the animals and the cutting of the meat and was satisfied that the meat could be safely sold. He also tracked and gave reports on the price the meat was being sold at, and that the weights used were not being tampered with.[76] Finally, vegetables were only permitted to be sold before midday, before they spoiled in the unforgiving Andalusian sun.[77] Whilst the *asistente* understandably delegated much of the business of monitoring food prices and supply (to his *tenientes*, for example), he was kept constantly informed by the *alcalde del matadero* and other municipal officials and was required to intervene actively, imposing penalties against those who transgressed the regulations. The *asistente* also negotiated on behalf of the city to secure grain when it was scarce, an aspect to his role that the city council emphasised when trying to delay the appointment of a new *asistente* in 1678, when Carlos Herrera Ramírez de Arellano was engaged in trying to secure grain from the north and the negotiations were at a delicate stage.[78] The crown granted this request for a postponement, in clear recognition of the significance of arguments concerning the city's food supply.

Although the *asistente* was not always able to prevent dearth, his role in trying to ensure the city remained stocked with food was hands-on, demanding, and vital. Yet the most important

[74] Carmona, *Crónica urbana*, p. 17.
[75] Matilde Santamaría Amaíz, 'La alimentación', in Alcalá-Zamora (ed.), *La vida cotidiana*, p. 312.
[76] *Bando de 1629*, fo. 131r.
[77] Ibid., fo. 130v.
[78] City council to Charles II, 9 July 1678, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 48, fo. 1v.

factors were out of his control. The climate of the 1600s, coupled with the fiscal demands of Philip IV and Charles II, resulted in a 'fatal synergy' of human and natural factors (that Geoffrey Parker sees as the prime cause of crisis in this century).[79] The city's food demands were much reduced following the demographic catastrophe of the 1649 plague, yet even so, the city's ability to avoid full-blown subsistence crises, 1652 aside, owes much to the careful activities of the *asistente*. The *asistentes*' behaviour was often conditioned, however, by an appreciation of a popular willingness to intervene directly and violently over food prices or shortage. Bobadilla had stated that on matters pertaining to the regulation of the spaces of food production and storage, *corregidores* and *asistentes* had 'supremo poder y autoridad'.[80]

Politics in early modern Spain was frequently conceptualised in bodily terms. We have already seen how Philip IV, under Olivares's direction, was keen to avoid a 'two-headed' government in Seville (p. 93), and the difficulties faced by the monarchy were often described as afflictions attacking a human body. Bobadilla had advised that the ideal *corregidor*, as well as being morally virtuous, should be strong of body.[81] Keeping the city healthy, meanwhile, was another crucial aspect to their office. Providing for the city's subsistence was one aspect to keeping its population alive and healthy; protecting it against plague proved to be a greater challenge. Plague in early modern Seville has been researched in some detail by scholars, although most research has been focused on the late sixteenth-century, when a series of epidemics hit the city. Alexandra Parma and Noble David Cook's account of 1580-1 is full of rich archival detail and highlights the central role of the *asistente* in organising the city's response to emergencies:

> In times of crisis not only was he called upon to direct the city government, administer justice, and make decisions affecting the entire province, but he or his deputies were expected to address daily emergencies, to coordinate the efforts of various officials, and to respond to letters and petitions from *vecinos* and visitors alike.[82]

[79] Parker, *Global Crisis*, p. xxv.
[80] Bobadilla, *Política*, 2.3.4, p. 90.
[81] Ibid., 1.1.8, p. 125.
[82] Cook and Cook, *Plague Files*, p. 200.

Kristy Wilson Bowers also emphasises the *asistente's* role in heading the emergency plague commissions of city officials and doctors that were formed during serious incidences of plague.[83] During other disasters, such as flood, the *asistente* had a similarly pivotal role.

None of the sixteenth-century plagues were as damaging as the 1649 plague however, which cut the city's population in half, with probably some sixty thousand deaths. The city remained terrified of the merest hint of plague for the rest of the 1600s.[84] Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga introduced the year 1649 as 'el mas tragico' suffered by the city since its re-conquest in the thirteenth century.[85] It seems likely that the plague had been encouraged by flooding earlier that year. The pooling of stagnant water in the city after the flood created unsanitary conditions and led to, as one manuscript account described, 'corrupcion en el ayre', always identified as a cause of plague by contemporaries.[86] The *asistente* in 1649 was Diego de Cárdenas, the count of Puebla del Maestre, who had negotiated with the king over accepting the position for a second time after previous struggles with the *regente* of the royal court. (See pp. 90-1) When plague was reported to have reached some neighbouring towns, and before it reached Seville, the *asistente* formed a *junta de salud* (emergency council of health) that then 'començado a emplearse en quanto podia conducir a la preseruacion, y al remedio [of the city]'.[87] They needed to make decisions connected to trade and communication: for example, whether to suspend trading on the Guadalquivir in 1648 when they heard of plague in Murcia, which they did. Due to the city's reliance on goods brought into the city, such decisions were not lightly made.[88]

Once plague hit in summer 1649, the *asistente* was in constant communication with the crown, and worked to monitor the activity of the city's medical professionals.[89] The importance of

[83] Bowers, *Plague and Public Health*, pp. 46-7.
[84] Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 74.
[85] Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales*, p. 708.
[86] 'Relación del contagio que padeció en esta ciudad (1649)', *Memorias de diferentes cosas sucedidas en esta muy noble y mui leal ciudad de Sevilla* (1696), BCC 59-1-05, fo. 55v- 62r and 65r. The city council was not blind to this risk after flooding: see pp. 232-3. For 'bad air' as a cause of plague in this period see Leona Skelton, 'Beadles, Dunghills and Noisome excrements: Regulating the Environment in Seventeenth-Century Carlisle', *International Journal of Regional and Local History*, 9:1 (2014), p. 58 and John Henderson, 'Epidemie, miasmi e il corpo dei poveri a Firenze nella prima età moderna', *Storia urbana*, 29:112 (2005), pp. 129-40.
[87] Morales Padrón, *Memorias*, p. 115 and Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales*, p. 709.
[88] 'Relación del contagio', fo. 52v.
[89] Ibid., fo. 95r and 91r.

the *asistente*'s skills as a communicator and delegator is again clear. The threat of plague made food supply much harder to guarantee. During plague, breadsellers from nearby towns such as Alcalá would refuse to enter, and members of both the city council and the *Real Audiencia* would have to go personally into the surrounding towns and villages to requisition supplies.[90] Plague, along with flood, was an all-encompassing crisis that reveals the core concerns of early modern government and helps us understand how it functioned. During and after plague, the king might be asked to interrupt regular governmental processes on the city. In the winter of 1650, over a year after the plague, the city and the count of Puebla del Maestre both urged the king to postpone the appointment of a new *asistente*. Their argument was that with such urgent work needed to help the city recover from flood and plague, it made no sense to install a new *asistente* who would need time to appreciate what needed to be done. The city council in their letter spoke glowingly of the count's conduct during the plague: he had worked 'con ynimitable amor a sus Vecinos' and 'riesgo evidente de [su] vida'.[91] The request was granted, but only six months later in June of 1651 the count wrote once more to the court, this time asking that he be allowed to return to court and a new *asistente* be appointed. He cited, the *Cámara* relayed to the king, not only the financial expense that Seville's difficulties had demanded of him, but also the 'continuo trabajo personal' he had expended in the position, not only putting his own person at 'riesgo evidente', but also that of his wife and children. He considered the threats of a plague-stricken Seville so great that 'la sucesion de su cassa' was at danger. The count was clearly exhausted by the four continuous years he had worked in his second stint as *asistente* and the king responded by granting him the licence to return to court.[92] His physical and financial exhaustion was probably accompanied by emotional burnout. Having worked through the city's worst ever plague, the count could not have avoided similar horrors to those witnessed by one diarist of the plague who remarked that the sight of a ten month-old baby starving to death 'me causó mucha lástima'.[93]

[90] Ibid., fo. 63v.
[91] City council to Philip IV, 30 December 1650, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 31.
[92] *Real Cámara* to Philip IV, 29 June 1651, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 32.
[93] Morales Padrón, *Memorias*, p. 124.

It was not only official sources that praised the count's conduct. One eyewitness account commended his efforts, along with those of his *teniente* and the *alcalde mayor*, saying that 'no se pudo mas'.[94] This account emphasised the count's personal spiritual response: the *asistente* was 'muy deuoto de la imagen de Nuestra Señora de la Iniesta' at the Church of St Julian and organised favours to the image and its use in a procession, for which the secular and clerical authorities worked in cooperation.[95] Ortiz de Zúñiga also described the collaboration of the cathedral and city councils in organising religious processions, meeting symbolically during a procession on 2 July when they came together to ask for divine intervention and a halt to the plague.[96] Similar moments of apparent secular-clerical unity were common during other disasters such as floods (see p. 238), but the emphasis on the *asistente*'s religious devotions suggests both the particular dedication of the count and that for at least some of the city's residents, their moral and spiritual actions were as significant as their more strictly political ones. The impression is that the count was a pious and committed public servant who engaged with the city's local religious culture and worked hard to protect the city's population from harm. The *asistente's* own discourse with the crown and the *Real Cámara* leaves a similar impression. Ultimately, though, by June 1651 he felt less physically and emotionally able to carry out his duties. However integrated *asistentes* became into the urban life of the city they were eventually going to leave, often on their own terms and with the city powerless to retain them. Plagues were a threat that brought the various institutions and spheres of authority within the city together, united in the common goal of survival. As part of this shared endeavour, the *asistente* worked directly in the city in a hands-on capacity, in close conjunction with the city council and relevant experts.

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[94] Ibid., p. 119.
[95] Ibid., pp. 122-3.
[96] Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales*, p. 711.

iii. Death of an asistente

Pedro Mesía de Tobar, the count of Molina de Herrera, died in Seville on 10 July 1664 after twelve days of illness, having been *asistente* of the city for nineteen months. The unexpected vacancy in the office of the *asistente* provoked jurisdictional confusion and, as has been discussed in Chapter 2 (p. 85), conflict between the city council and the *Real Audiencia*. Aside from these political implications, there was the practical issue of a funeral to deal with. A manuscript in the Biblioteca Colombina recorded the events following the count's death, including the plans for the funeral, and the surprisingly complex set of procedural uncertainties that the city attempted to resolve.[97] The manuscript was compiled at the end of the century by one Ignacio de Góngora but the author of the account is unknown, although it was clearly someone with a good knowledge of the affairs of the city council.

The jurisdictional problems stemmed from a lack of recorded precedent on the procedure for burying an *asistente* of the city. An account of the death in 1572 of Doctor Pedro López de Mesa, then *asistente*, was included by Góngora in the same compilation, but only described how the city council named his *tenientes* to govern in his stead, and had to pay for burial out of the city purse as the family was 'tan pobre' to cover the costs themselves.[98] Góngora himself inserted a comment which bemoaned the lack of precedents available to the city, describing it as a cause of 'embaraço y dificultad'. To compensate, he transcribed beneath the account of 1664 a description of the funeral of Don Rodrigo, marquis of Cádiz, in 1492, taken from the chronicle of the House of Ponce de Leon, to give context to the various roles that should be adopted by urban figures in the funeral.[99] His account of the 1664 funeral demonstrates further the importance attached to precedence in Spanish political thought, and how the rituals of life and death could be implicated in the ongoing process of negotiating the limits of authority in seventeenth-century Seville. The role of *asistente* had symbolic and practical aspects that had to be managed simultaneously,

[97] 'Muerte en Sevilla de Mesía o Mejía de Tobar, conde de Molina de Herrera', *Memorias de diferentes cosas*..., BCC 59-1-05, fo. 40v-47v.
[98] Ibid., fo. 40r.
[99] Ibid., fo. 47r-v.

another balancing act alongside that of dealing with competing royal and urban concerns. The tensions inherent in this role were made especially apparent in the period of limbo when an *asistente* died during his term of office.

The count of Molina had died in his quarters in the royal palace of the city from 'tabardillo' – typhoid fever, and there was an instant concern on the part of the city council to ensure that its privileges were respected. On hearing of Molina's death, Pedro Caballero de Huescas, the oldest member of the city council and its *alcalde mayor*, immediately went to the residence of Pedro de Piñeda y Salinas, the *escribano mayor* at the time, in the company of the *procurador mayor*, Gonzalo de Saavedra y Monsalve, and made a note of the time of the *asistente*'s death:

> en su conformidad el dicho Alcalde Mayor mando llamar a Cabildo para el dicho efecto el dia siguiente, comunicandolo tambien con algunos Regidores a quien pudo ver, que todos fueron de sentir no se perdiese la costumbre, y preeminencia de la Ciudad, ni en la circunstancia mas leve, sino se hiciese lo propio que otras vezes.[100]

The concern in the first instance was to have the city's rights defended against encroachment by other institutions in the city such as the *Real Audiencia*. It was only once this was established that more practical steps were taken. In this instance, the city's anxieties again centred on a symbol of office – the *vara de justicia* that the *asistente* carried – and who held it until a new *asistente* entered office. Trying to guard their rights and privileges, the city conferred the *vara* to one of the *tenientes* of the *asistente* – Juan Ignacio de Truxillo – who was appointed to oversee the sessions of the city council in the interim.[101] Molina and Truxillo and the issue of precedence and symbols of office has already been discussed in this chapter – it was Molina whose use of the military *bastón* the city council objected to. These matters were obviously an especially important consideration at this time, in the aftermath to Pedro Núñez de Guzman's long tenure, the continuation of war in Portugal, and perhaps an increased awareness of the city's vulnerability and decline.

[100] Ibid., fo. 40v.
[101] Ibid., fo. 42r.

There was also a funeral to organise. Civic ceremonies were of great importance to early modern Spanish cities. In the words of José Antonio Mateos Royo, in a civic ceremony 'the town became a permanent stage on which the identity of social groups and institutions was displayed'.[102] Processions became visual demonstrations of the hierarchy that ruled the town and were heavily contested as a result. *Corregidores*, as both the head of the city council and a royal minister, could frequently be drawn into arguments over their placement in civic ceremonies, especially in cities where there were other royal institutions such as courts of appeal.[103] Throughout the early modern period, Seville was regularly the stage for ceremony, procession and display. The religious institutions of the city frequently organised lavish events, but these could often lead to arguments over the role of civic individuals and institutions in the ceremonies. In 1671, for example, Seville's cathedral chapter celebrated the success of their campaign to canonise Ferdinand III with multiple celebrations including a full procession of all the city's institutions. The city council walked just ahead of the cathedral chapter, bearing Ferdinand's royal standard. The *asistente* walked after, with the cathedral chapter, carrying the dead king's sword. Although the procession suggested unity, the city had in fact been unhappy with its placing in the line-up and nearly abstained from attending until a letter from Queen Mariana resolved the issue. In bullfights organised by the city council later that year, the cathedral chapter chose to snub an invitation to attend, unhappy about their location in the seating plan.[104] Ceremony was a vital aspect of politics in early modern urban Spain, and in this context, it is unsurprising that the city council was anxious about the ceremonial funeral after the death of its *asistente*.

The city council's records did not provide them, in this instance, with any guidance or instruction on how to proceed. They were worried that they might be prevented in law from having any role at all at the funeral, as they were concerned the city's 'insignias' could not be used at the burial ceremony for a royal official such as the *asistente*. The city council summoned lawyers to address this specific question, and these lawyers again consulted and referenced

[102] José Antonio Mateos Royo, 'All the town is a stage: civic ceremonies and religious festivities in Spain during the Golden Age', *Urban History*, 26:2 (1999), p. 167.
[103] See, for example, Amigo Vázquez, *Epifanía del poder regio*, p. 209, and María José del Río Barredo, *Madrid, Urbs Regia. La capital ceremonial de la Monarquía Católica* (Madrid, 2000).
[104] Wunder, 'Search for Sanctity', pp. 168 and 192-3.

Bobadilla's *Política*, to reassure them that there was no law that prevented them from managing the funeral.[105] The count had asked that he initially be buried in Seville, before being moved to his estate, and the city council worked in cooperation with the archbishop – Antonio Paiño – to make the necessary arrangements, and for the body to be embalmed ahead of the funeral itself, to be held on 12 July. The count's body was prepared in a room of the Alcázar known as the 'Prince's Room' and festooned with the various symbols and insignia it displayed. His membership of the Order of Calatrava was emphasised, and his body covered in its mantle, but the *bastón* was placed in his hand. According to the account, 'quedo el cuerpo tan bien enbalsamado, y tan bien armado, vestido, y dispuesto que parecia estar dormido solamente'.[106] Difficulties organising the burial were created by the small space in which the ceremony took place, because lots of individuals wanted to attend – *veintiquatros*, city nobility, the *asistente*'s family, his *tenientes*, and members of the *Real Audiencia*. Owing to the embarrassment that might be caused by any of the civic institutions being excluded, the archbishop agreed that the burial would be conducted in secret, and the funeral held in the great chapel of the cathedral, which everyone could attend.[107] The ongoing war with Portugal caused further complications – the commander for Seville's *tercio* (then billeted nearby), Franscisco Tello de Portugal, entered the city at the head of his force of five hundred troops, with the intention of them also attending the funeral. Not only did their numbers cause problems, but any military presence in the city was unpopular, as soldiers required accommodation and did not always behave well. The archbishop had to request they did not remain in the city, and in acquiescence they ended up holding a separate funeral for their *maestre de campo*.[108] Eventually, the funeral proceeded with no further argument, and the author of the manuscript describes the wider reaction to the *asistente*'s death as one of widespread grief and mourning at the loss of a popular public servant.

> Despues vajo a la Igleisa la Comunidad del convento, y se canto el ultimo responso con gran pausa, y gravedad, poniendo fin a las Honrras, pero no al sentimiento de la muerta del S[or] Conde de Molina de Herrara su Asistente a

[105] 'Muerte en Sevilla', fo. 42r.
[106] Ibid., fo. 42v-43r.
[107] Ibid., fo. 43r-44r.
[108] Ibid., fo. 43r-v.

> quien toda la ciudad estimaba, y queria, por sus prendas, y las muestras que dio de su acertado gobierno en el tiempo que la rigio.[109]

The author clearly had a good knowledge of what was happening at city council discussions and with city politics more generally, so his positive appraisal of the *asistente*'s standing is perhaps unsurprising. But what stands out is the great concern his funeral had caused. Nor should historians take such anxiety about ceremony and procession lightly. As I will observe in Chapter 5 (p. 238), religious procession was understood as a practical act, whilst symbolic aspects to rule were seen as vital.

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Even in death the *asistente* remained a contested figure: on the one hand a royal agent, on the other a public servant working to ensure the city's wellbeing. This chapter has demonstrated the conflicts and the difficulties that could be encountered on account of this tension. The *asistente*'s work, as we have also seen at times in this chapter, could be heavily dictated by the natural environment. It is the natural environment to which I will turn in the next chapter, particularly the Guadalquivir River, and how it interacted with the built environment and impacted further on the *asistente*'s role.

[109] Ibid., fo. 46v-47r.

4. The Guadalquivir River and the *asistente*: the politics of water and urban space in Seville

In the characteristically evocative words of Simon Schama, rivers serve as readymade metaphors for 'the life and death of nations and empires and the fateful alternation between commerce and calamity'.[1] Few phrases could serve better to describe the conflicting role of the Guadalquivir River in seventeenth-century Seville than the dichotomy of 'commerce and calamity'. The opportunities that a booming transatlantic trade had introduced to one of Europe's most notable inland ports in the previous century became limited by the practical challenges of the river's silting and its repeated flooding in the seventeenth century. The decline of the city progressed in tandem with destructive surges of the Guadalquivir and the clogging of its riverbed. Rivers are central to the geography of a region and their manifest power, for Pierre Claude Reynard, 'offers a most visible image of movement, agency, and consistency, reaching widely across the land and irrigating vast regions'.[2] The Guadalquivir was at the heart of Seville's identity, its languorous curve becoming as much a part of the city's core iconography as the cathedral and its Moorish tower, the Giralda.

Most pictorial representations of the city from the early modern period place the river in the foreground, the city's built structures seeming to rise out of the shimmering water. Travelling European artists were inevitably struck by the majesty of the Guadalquivir, as the popularity of panoramic city images grew throughout the sixteenth century.[3] The drawing was made by Joris Hoefnagel, whose depictions of the city from the 1560s were adapted for use in compendia of urban images, such as Georg Braun's *Civitates orbis terrarium* (Figure 2).[4] Hoefnagel's drawing that gave most emphasis of all to the river, viewing the city from the north at a low angle, was

[1] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London, 1995), p. 261.
[2] Pierre Claude Reynard, 'Explaining an Unstable Landscape: Claiming Islands of the Early-Modern Rhône', *Environment and History*, 19 (2013), p. 43.
[3] See Richard Kagan, *Spanish Cities of the Golden Age: the views of Anton van der Wyngaerde* (London, 1989).
[4] Elena María Santiago Páez, 'Sevilla, la evolución de una imagen', in María Dolores Cabra Loredo and Elena María Santiago Páez (eds.), *Iconografía de Sevilla. Tomo primero 1400-1650* (Madrid, 1988), p. 17.

reworked as a painting and surrounded by a thick border in 1573, full of imagery suggesting New World encounter and exchange, a seaborne scene replete with aquatic monsters and a Castilian caravel. In such depictions the Guadalquivir and Seville were a gateway to the realising of the Habsburg monarchy's global, imperial ambitions. In the panorama of Seville included in later editions of the *Civitates*, the Guadalquivir that runs through the lower-centre of the image seems to join in a line with the city walls in the upper part of the view, natural and built barriers joining to embrace central Seville and define its space (Figure 3).

As more images of Seville were produced, attention increasingly shifted to the city's port, El Arenal, and the bustling activity of the ships and manpower that gathered there. A late sixteenth-century painting, probably the work of Alonso Sánchez Coello, demonstrates this new focus (Figure 4). The river – tranquil in Hoefnagel's view – on Coello's canvas is clogged with ships while the rest of the city seems peripheral to this frenzied industry. Coello also adopts the most common perspective for early modern images of Seville, painting as if looking straight at El Arenal from Triana in the west. Triana itself is reduced by this perspective to a peripheral role, barely acknowledged, despite its essential contributions to the economic activity that the painting most draws attention to. The perpetuation of this pictorial blueprint for the city is clear from a 1660 canvas by an anonymous artist (Figure 5) which, whilst offering an altogether more placid impression of Seville, nevertheless continues to marginalise Triana and emphasise the river. The walled city and its buildings are confined to a narrow strip of canvas in the centre of the painting. The Guadalquivir's impact on artistic representations of the city led to a selective and somewhat restricted impression of Seville in the wider contemporary imagination. In the seventeenth century, images of Seville were also necessarily images of the Guadalquivir River; the two were immediately and inseparably associated.



Figure 2: Joris Hoefnagel, *Sevilla*, in Georg Braun, *Civitates Orbis Terrarum. Liber Primus* (1582).



Figure 3: Joris Hoefnagel, *Sevilla*, in Georg Braun, *Urbium Praecipuarum Totius Mundi. Liber Quartus* (1594).



Figure 4: Alonso Sánchez Coello, *Vista de Sevilla* (1576-1600).



Figure 5: Anonymous, *Vista de Sevilla* (1660).

For historians, it is impossible to consider a city in isolation from its natural environment. Dichotomous constructions of 'city' and 'nature' should be challenged; urban historians are necessarily environmental historians. The goal of Chapter 4 is to demonstrate this assertion (particularly relevant within the intellectual framework of seventeenth-century Spain). This will illustrate how urban government meant political leaders engaged with a range of processes that impacted and depended on the environment (in other words that the environment was a political reality as much as a natural one) and, more specifically, explain the *asistente*'s role in these urban-environmental issues. Within the wider purpose of my thesis, this chapter establishes the hands-on nature of urban government in early modern Spain; it connects the jurisdictional problems seen in Chapter 2 to real, practical issues; it encourages the inclusion of environmental matters into wider historical debates and approaches. As part of those goals, I explore how Seville was spatially and topographically determined by its natural environment – arguing that the river was as much a part of the urban as the city's buildings – and describe the infrastructure that supported the city.

First, this chapter narrates how Seville was spatially defined by its natural environment, in particular the course of the Guadalquivir River and how it changed its course from Roman times until the early modern period. I argue that historians of early modern cities might make more use of sociological theory relating to 'urban metabolism' and better acknowledge the vital importance of the environment in early modern politics. I then highlight the political implications of the city's environment and how its infrastructure was managed. What were the explicit responsibilities, duties and powers of the city council and especially the *asistente* in respect to the environment? The processes and procedures in place to carry out these responsibilities reflected the wider political organisation of the Spanish monarchy – characterised as they were by *ad hoc* measures, the importance of cooperation between royal agents and more local representatives, and frequently putting the burden onto the poor. A key figure for the city's infrastructure was the *maestro mayor*, the city's master of works, who provided expert advice on how to deal with engineering and architectural matters, organising and putting into action any agreed improvements. His relationship with the city council and the *asistente* was a key component of the

city's functioning from year to year, and a brief exploration of the role elaborates some of these themes.

The third subchapter acknowledges recent work by historians of Seville in exploring the management of the city's supply of drinking water – a complex physical, legal and political puzzle, in which the *asistentes* found their position as an intermediary between municipality and crown exposed. Due to a peculiar legal situation, in which the Spanish monarchy maintained ownership of the purest drinking water available to the city, access to good potable water was hierarchically organised, which led to social conflict and attempted royal repression. The politicisation of the environment in early modern Seville was stark. Finally, I examine in detail the 1631 proposal by *asistente* Diego Hurtado de Mendoza to construct a stone bridge across the Guadalquivir. This was the most ambitious plan to improve Seville's urban infrastructure in the seventeenth century; the proposal's terms are informative of contemporary environmental attitudes, revealing how the environment might be politicised to suit a specific historical-political context. The failure of the proposal is illustrative not only of engineering and environmental challenges, but also of the political structure of the Habsburg monarchy and how its approach to urban government had a marked impact on daily life in seventeenth-century Seville.

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i. The Guadalquivir River and Seville

a) Urban metabolism and early modern 'naturalness'

The late Antonio Domínguez Ortiz observed that the words 'Guadalquivir' and 'Betis' (its Latin antecedent) hardly ever appear in the documentation of early modern Seville. Rather, the city's river is called just that – 'the river'.[5] From a *sevillano* perspective, there could be only one river under discussion. The definite article of 'el río' lends an impression of permanence and immutability to the river and its association with the city. In reality, however, the relationship between a city, its inhabitants, and its natural context is constantly fluctuating, responding not only to pressures such as climate change and disasters like flooding, but also to human processes and socio-economic and political conditions. To understand this relationship, historians might productively apply the concept of 'urban metabolism' from sociology and human geography. Urban metabolism reconfigures the relationship between 'city' and 'nature' by eroding the binary division between nature and society, and shifting the focus to 'metabolic' processes whereby city and nature are acted on by social and physical conduits and networks, which might impact on different spaces to varying extents at different times.

Karl Marx was one of the inspirations for this theoretical framework, suggesting that all human history stemmed from the 'metabolic' process by which human labour turned natural resources into other 'stuff' (metabolism coming from the Greek *μεταβολή* – meaning 'change'). From that starting point 'nature' is placed at the centre of social relations, and the urban environment is specifically seen as a product of natural conditions, social processes, and the myriad ways in which these define each other.[6] Erik Swyngedouw and Maria Kaika have argued that the strength of the concept of urban metabolism is partly in showing that 'socio-ecological processes are intensely political, and confirm[ing] that urban theory without nature cannot but be

[5] Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 56.
[6] Nik Heyen, Maria Kaika and Erik Swyngedouw, 'Urban political ecology: politicizing the production of urban natures', in Heyen, Kaika and Swyngedouw (eds.), *In the Nature of Cities: Urban political ecology and the politics of urban metabolism* (London, 2006), pp. 7-8.

incomplete'.[7] For example, within this framework, the building of a new bridge would not be a simple case of nature's conquest by human society, but instead a reconfiguring of the socio-ecological dynamic of an urban space.

A focus on processes is also useful for historians in trying to move away from environmental determinism and overambitious claims regarding nature's influence over history, whilst still giving adequate space and weight to the environment's importance. Donald Worster, in an influential book on the irrigation of the American West, warned against environmental determinism in particular; he argued that natural and human history should instead be viewed as a 'dialectic', a state of 'challenge-response-challenge, where neither nature nor humanity ever achieves absolute sovereignty'.[8] Scholars of urban metabolism would go further, focusing less on the conflict between two different spheres and emphasising instead the wider implications of human interactions with nature. William Cronon, in his significant work on the development of Chicago, stated that 'just as our own lives continue to be embedded in a web of *natural* relationships, nothing in nature remains untouched by the web of *human* relationships that constitute our common history' (his italics).[9] Whilst Cronon's claim has more immediately visible attestation in the post-industrial landscape, in an area as long-settled and with as diverse a set of historic cultural influences as the lower Guadalquivir valley, even in the early modern period, historians cannot speak of a 'natural world' or see the city as in some respect 'unnatural', or even entirely a 'human' product.

Although these ideas have been principally applied to more modern contexts – indeed the concept of metabolism arose out of a nineteenth-century concern for modernisation, with change and circulation at its core – the socio-political implications of urban metabolism are equally relevant for the early modern period.[10] It is also important to establish the futility of dichotomising a 'human' city and a 'natural' environment in light of the realisation that no such

[7] Maria Kaika and Erik Swyngedouw, 'The Urbanization of Nature: Great Promises, Impasse, and New Beginnings', in Bridge and Watson (eds.) *New Blackwell Companion to the City*, p. 98.
[8] Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (Oxford, 1985), p. 22.
[9] William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (London, 1991), p. 19.
[10] Erik Swyngedouw, 'Metabolic urbanization: The making of cyborg cities', in Heyen, Kaika and Swyngedouw (eds.), *In the Nature of Cities*, p. 22.

distinction was recognised or articulated in seventeenth-century Spain. Rather, although there was an awareness of the difference between 'city' and 'country' life, both were places where the intervention of human stewardship to promote orderliness was desirable. Even early modern Spanish political treatises reveal that 'naturalness' was not seen as an end in itself but, rather, something that had to be realised by human intervention, skill, and organisation. These texts were read and debated by members of the political elite such as the men who became *asistentes*, and therefore offer initial clues to how environmental considerations fed into urban governance. Juan Antonio de Vera y Figueroa's *El Enbaxador*, published in Seville in 1620, offers evidence of this point.[11] The text, a conduct manual for ambassadors of the crown, takes the form of a dialogue between two friends, Julio and Ludovico, at the country estate to which the former had retired, which boasted 'la agricultura, i vida solitaria de los campos; favorecido uno i otro de Principes i Filosofos', where Ludovico and Julio enjoyed the 'belleza del jardin presente'. Indeed, the first discourse of the dialogue opens with Ludovico praising his friend for the villa and the combination of 'arte' and 'naturaleza' that it displayed. Although Julio states that part of the benefit of retiring to his villa was avoiding the 'achaques' that might be contracted more easily in the city, there is no suggestion that the villa is more 'natural' and the city 'unnatural'. Rather, it is the application of human skill and science ('arte') onto the land that resulted in an environment worthy of praise.[12] In other words, we might say that environments which were acknowledged as the product of metabolic processes between man and the natural world were those most esteemed.

That idea had been expressed even more explicitly in Juan de Castilla y de Aguayo's *El perfecto regidor* (1586), which provided conduct advice for city councilmen. Speaking about the experience that those elevated to municipal office should possess, de Aguayo argued: 'el que tiene abilidad sin experiencia, es como tierra sin labrar, que aunque de su natural sea buena, para

[11] Pedro Núñez de Guzmán, for example, owned this work. *Museo o Biblioteca selecta*, fo. 91r. Although to my knowledge no further catalogues of the collections of *asistentes* survive, given Figueroa was a confidant of Olivares – a powerful patron – we can expect his works to have been well-known. Vera y Figueroa (1583-1658) later served as a diplomat himself in Savoy (1625) and worked on the *Consejo de Indias*. See Vicente Lleó Cañal, 'El círculo sevillano de Olivares', in Noble Wood, Roe and Lawrance (eds.), *Poder y saber: Bibliotecas y bibliofilia en la época del conde-duque de Olivares* (Madrid, 2011), p. 57.
[12] Juan Antonio de Vera y Figueroa, *El Enbaxador* (Seville, 1620), fo. 1r-2v.

sembrar en ella no lo es'.[13] In this thinking, the environment's 'naturalness' was not compromised by human activity and exploitation, and in fact this very exploitation might allow the proper realisation of something's 'nature'.

After their conversation on the villa, the friends Ludovico and Julio in Vera y Figueroa's *Enbaxador* discuss the suitability of agriculturalists for the governing of kingdoms, citing ancient examples to attest that many great men had been first and foremost agriculturalists, before going on to describe more generally the delights of a well-maintained garden. The consideration of orderly landscaping led directly to a reflection on matters of state, and the task of a royal diplomat.[14] 'Natural' and 'human' affairs were not incompatible spheres of knowledge. Vera y Figueroa's text participates in tropes and traditions established by the popularity of Castiglione (the use of the name Ludovico an obvious indicator of this), of which the orderly country estate was a part; but the significance of the 'garden' is widespread and was applied more specifically to Seville. The scholar and antiquarian Alonso Morgado, when narrating the history of Andalusia in his 1587 *Historia de Sevilla*, cited Annius of Viterbo's description of Andalusia – 'Bethica' – as 'un Jardin de recreacion y deleytes', and that the province exceeded all others in recreation and benefit.[15] 'Natural' spaces were also 'human' ones, as their benefits were relevant only in so far as they benefitted man. There was no real binary division between a 'natural world' and a human one.

'Naturalness' was a God-given quality rather than a category distinction.[16] Indeed, the word 'naturaleza' in Castilian – 'nature' in modern English – lacked any immediate association with what today might be called the 'natural world'. Instead, 'naturaleza', as Covarrubias's *Tesoro* defined it, stemmed from the qualities bestowed on any given thing by God (their 'nature'

[13] Juan de Castilla y de Aguayo, *El perfecto regidor* (Salamanca, 1586), fo. 19v.
[14] Vera y Figueroa, *El Enbaxador*, fo. 3r-5r.
[15] Bethica (from which came 'Betis') was named after a mythical King Betho, supposedly the sixth king of Spain around 800 BCE. Alonso Morgado, *Historia de Sevilla, en qual se contiene sus antiguedades, grandezas, y cosas memorables en ella acontecidas, desde su fundacion hasta nuestros tiempos* (Seville, 1587), fo. 2r-v.
[16] This point has not been sufficiently studied by scholars and, when it has, more focus has been paid to intellectual history rather than the wider impact of this idea. See Lorraine Daston and Michael Stolleis, *Natural Law and Laws of Nature in Early Modern Europe: Jurisprudence, Theology, Moral and Natural Philosophy* (Aldershot, 2008) and Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal (eds.), *The Moral Authority of Nature* (Chicago, 2004).

in terms of qualities).[17] That which was natural was simply that which existed or acted in accordance with the way God created it, an understanding of 'naturalness' which had no need for a strict division between 'human' and 'natural' spheres. Accordingly, that which seemed 'unnatural' was in fact the result of a transgression from God's designs or could be a specific message from God himself.[18] A good example of this is the response to the appearance of 'monstrous animals' across Europe in the early modern period. In 1624 a tract in Spanish on the appearance of a 'monstruoso Pescado' in Poland, published in Lima, asserted that 'no es nuevo avisar Dios a los hombres por medio de animales, y monstruos.' On this occasion God had been provoked by 'guerras ay en el mundo, los enemigos [of Spain] nos corre[n] los mares, saquean las costas, y hazen otros daños', to put a monstrous fish into a 'rio de agua dulce' and thus suggest to the Spanish crown the need to defend its coasts.[19] The idea that an unruly or seemingly deviant nature might be a specific message from God will be a theme I revisit when I look at the flooding of Seville in the seventeenth century, but here it is simply important to establish that belief in divine creation in early modern Spain meant that there could be no categorical distinction between the natural world and human society, as there has been in more recent discourse. The 'natural' world was in constant interplay with human events, thanks to the fact that the divine authority embraced both spheres, and might use the former to comment on, or react to, the latter.

Accordingly, the development, or 'urbanisation', of a new area was not necessarily the eradication of nature, but could be its realisation. An example from early modern Seville illustrating this point is the area called Alameda de Hercules, in the north of the walled city (Figure 6).[20] This area was the lowest-lying section of land in the city, which posed certain environmental and infrastructural challenges.[21] During winter, when it rained, the land pooled

[17] Covarrubias, *Tesoro*, fo. 561r.
[18] On sins against nature, a key text was Thomas Aquinas, *Summae Theologiae*, II, II, q. 154, a. 12: 'The developed plan of living according to reason comes from man; the plan of nature comes from God, and therefore a violation of this plan, as by unnatural sin, is an affront to God, the ordainer of nature.'
[19] *La prometida declaracion venida de España, de las prodigiosas senales del monstruoso Pescado que se hallò en un rio de Polonia en Alemania, cuyo retrato se embiò a España, este año de 1624* (Lima, 1625), BL 593.h.22 (27), fo. 1r.
[20] Unfortunately I have not been able to consult Miguel Torres García's recently-released *Seville: Through the Urban Void* (London, 2016) prior to finishing this chapter. It is a 'biographic narrative' of the Alameda as an urban space across its history.
[21] Carmona, *Crónica urbana*, p. 69.

with water that settled, rather than running towards the river, creating swampy, unsanitary conditions. The area was popularly known as 'la laguna', but from the 1560s, it was decided that this area should be redeveloped to reflect the glory of then-king Philip II. Antonio José Albardonedo Freire has provided a detailed and sustained analysis of its reworking, placing it in the context of contemporary ideals of architecture and town planning. The project, that probably had its origins in the 1560s but began to be worked on from 1573, was ambitious, requiring the redevelopment of three square kilometres of land, previously in disuse and marshy, into an extended garden of level terrain. At the same time as draining the 'laguna', hydraulic structures for the supply of fresh water to the growing population in the surrounding area were to be introduced.[22] In practice, this meant the installation of pipes running from the city's supplies of fresh water to the east (see pp. 162-7) to the area, and the construction of public fountains to provide drinking water to nearby residents. For Freire, these fountains reflected a natural element that was nevertheless 'dominado por el ingenio del hombre', and also possessing 'connotaciones sensuales'. Whilst far short of the grandeur of public fountains such as Gian Lorenzo Bernini would create in Rome in the seventeenth century, the hydraulic works at the Alameda were nevertheless the most ambitious constructed in Seville in the early modern period.[23] Freire acknowledges the newly redeveloped Alameda as 'un espacio integrando: *naturaleza* [my italics], arte escultórico y arquetectónico', with sculptures of the city's ancient benefactors, Hercules and Julius Caesar, resulted in a symbolism both specific to Seville but also contributing to the iconography of the Habsburg monarchy.[24] 'Un teatro mundano' was created, writes Freire, that reflected the ambitions of the city and its sense of grandeur. The resulting symbiosis of art and nature, whilst owing in part a debt of inspiration to the Italian Renaissance, nevertheless reflects the fact that in early modern terms a binary division of 'nature' and 'man' is an unhelpful categorical distinction.[25] The ideal was an orderly management of the natural environment which benefited human society. The common divine origin of both man and the natural world largely

[22] Antonio José Albardonedo Freire, *El Urbanismo de Sevilla durante el reinado de Felipe II* (Seville, 2002), pp. 196-7.
[23] Ibid., p. 207 and Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, p. 289.
[24] Freire, *El Urbanismo de Sevilla*, p. 208.
[25] Ibid., p. 201.

precluded the likelihood of what would today be called an 'environmentalist' attitude. An environment well-managed and ordered by man was just as 'natural' as a wild one, if not more so, making the most as it did of the 'natural' resources and benefits of the land, and of the 'natural' talents given to man by God.

By acknowledging the unhelpfulness of dividing 'nature' and 'city' into binary categories, and incorporating methodological insights from recent geographical theory, with its grounding in political-environmental processes, the relationship of Seville and the Guadalquivir (and the natural environment more generally) can be more carefully explored, and the implication of the urban government and the *asistente* in this relationship made clear.



Figure 6: Anonymous, *La Alameda de Hércules de Sevilla* (1647).

b) The Guadalquivir and Seville's spatial organisation

It is worth establishing how exactly the city was organised around the river as well as its tributary streams. A spatial understanding of Seville and its water allows historians to challenge a dichotomous conception of 'nature' and 'city', with 'nature' as something essentially extrinsic. Rather, urban spatial realities were in a dynamic, symbiotic relationship with a natural

environment, a relationship that defined socio-economic and political conditions for human society.[26]

Historians of early modern Seville lack a street plan of the city as it was during either its sixteenth-century heyday or its seventeenth-century decline. The panoramic views of Seville discussed above (pp. 131-2) are too abstracted, simplified, or idealised to serve as accurate guides to the organisation of the city's streets and structures. The earliest accurate plan of the city was produced in 1771, commissioned by Pablo de Olavide who was then the *asistente* (Appendix 2, pp. 256-8). Despite the date of its composition, this map mostly reflects how the city was organised in the seventeenth century. The main difference is in the area of El Arenal in the lower right corner of the map. In the seventeenth century it was a flourishing port area: a hive of bustling human activity. By the late eighteenth century the New World trade had relocated to Cádiz, and El Arenal had become placid and sparse. Its conversion into an area more for recreation than industry, as it remains today, is apparent from the newly constructed bullring on the riverbank. Another deficiency of the plan is in its almost complete marginalisation of the neighbourhood of Triana, across the river from central, walled Seville. This ignoring of Triana reflected a wider social reality, the environmental and political consequences of which I will explore in the next chapter in relation to flooding. However, despite these weaknesses, Olavide's street map is the best rough guide we have to Seville's seventeenth-century spatial and physical organisation.

From its earliest history, the city's orientation and development had been facilitated by the river. Economic and military activity centred on the Guadalquivir was the key facet of Seville's Roman growth. First mentioned in Caesar's military accounts as a shipbuilding centre, Roman Seville (Hispalis) served as a 'conventual' capital (meaning the capital of a judicial and administrative unit within the wider Roman province of Baetica), and gained a reputation as an inland port: it was described by Silius Italicus, a first-century consul and epic poet, as 'renowned

[26] For further elaboration of these ideas, see Edward Soja, 'Seeing Nature Spatially', in David Albertson and Cabell King (eds.), *Without Nature? A New Condition for Theology* (New York, 2010), pp. 182-98.

for commerce and for its alternating tides'.[27] In Roman times the Guadalquivir and the Tagarete (its tributary stream, see Figure 7) were even more prone to flooding than they were in the early modern period. From year to year the height of the river would fluctuate. The archaeological evidence suggests that it was at times of greater fluvial stability that the city was able to expand, such as in the first and second centuries AD, and that structures such as the city's walls were built with these fluctuations in mind. Built near the river's edge, the walls acted as a flood barrier against inundations – as much a defence against hostile natural forces as human ones.[28]



Figure 7: The Tagarete's course around Seville. Close-up of *Plano topográphico* (1771).

For early modern *sevillanos*, however, their city had an even more ancient origin, though one still based on the benefits accorded by the Guadalquivir. Morgado in his history, for example, claimed that the city had been founded by Hercules in 1726 BC after he had travelled up the Guadalquivir and, struck by the fertility promoted by the river, found 'vn buen logar do poblassen

[27] Leonard A. Curchin, *Roman Spain: Conquest and Assimilation* (London, 1991), pp. 120-2.
[28] Daniel González Acuña, *Forma Vrbis Hispalensis: El urbanismo de la ciudad romana de Hispalis a través de los testimonios arqueológicos* (Seville, 2011), pp. 30-1.

vna gran ciudad', leaving a marble plinth inscribed with the promise 'aqui sera poblada la gran civdad'.[29] In a later chapter Morgado further elaborated on the grandeur of the Guadalquivir and the associated benefits. Although 'pequeño' at its source in Sierra de Cazorla in Jaén, on the Guadalquivir's course through Andalusia the region's other rivers ran into it, so that by Cordoba it ran 'muy hinchado, y furioso', and by Seville the water was so 'tan profundo y caudaloso' that it provided a safe harbour to any fleet.[30] Comparing the Guadalquivir to the Ganges (as described by Ptolemy), Morgado described it as one of the 'uno de los tres mayores del mundo', noting the winter floods that saw the Guadalquivir's water spread over the surrounding land.[31]

It has been suggested that, between the first and ninth centuries there was another channel to the Guadalquivir, running through much of what today is the city centre, which gradually receded, thus allowing for the expansion of the city into the north especially. New areas were made available for urban expansion, and the city's Islamic rulers extended the city walls to reflect the new urban possibilities.[32] Across the main channel of the river, the neighbourhood of Triana developed next to the Vega, a fertile fluvial plain in land again crisscrossed by old channels of the Guadalquivir (see Figure 8).[33] Triana was home to a fortress, the Castillo de Triana, which, whilst dating from a few centuries before, by the thirteenth century guarded the approach to the wooden pontoon bridge crossing the Guadalquivir (see below, pp. 173-5). There is even an architectural argument that churches in the neighbourhood were fortified to enhance its defensive strength.[34] This function arose entirely out of the district's position in respect to the river and the rest of the walled city. Nature and geography defined the urban. In the words of Díaz Garrido in her study on Triana, the Guadalquivir was a 'presencia protagonista' in the development of the city, providing the motivation for its being established and being the 'principal condicionante de su desarrollo'.[35]

[29] Morgado, *Historia de Sevilla*, fo. 4r-v.
[30] Ibid., fo. 43r-v.
[31] Ibid., fo. 44r.
[32] Miguel Torres García, 'Contribución al estudio del desarrollo urban del sector Norte extramuros de la primera ceca sevillana. Morfogénesis del sector entre las calles Feria, Perís Mencheta y la Alameda de Hércules', *Medievalista* (2010), pp. 12-3.
[33] Díaz Garrido, *Triana y la orilla derecha del Guadalquivir*, pp. 61-8.
[34] For example, the Iglesia de Santa Ana constructed in the thirteenth century. Ibid., p. 156.
[35] Ibid., p. 61.

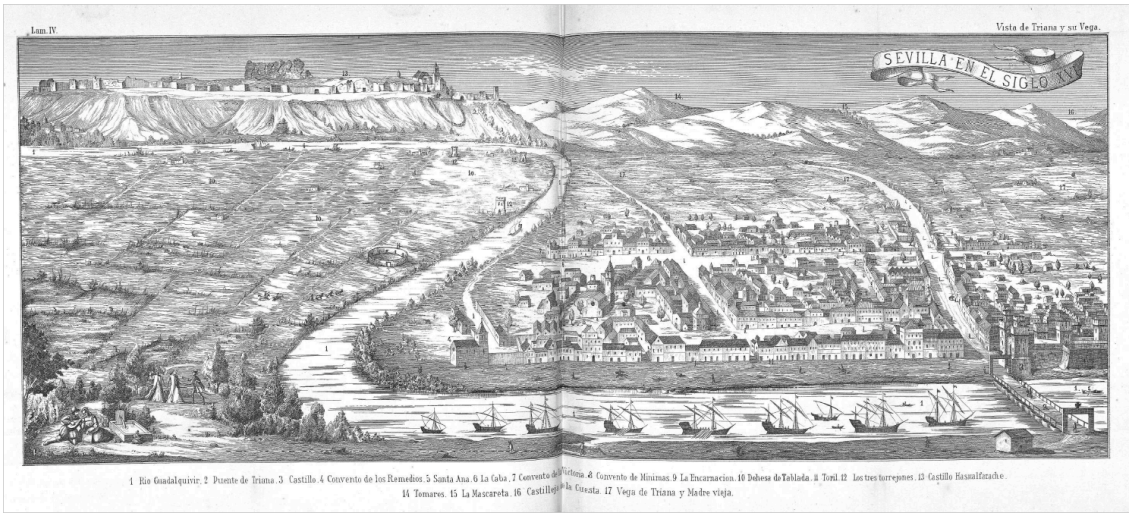


Figure 8: *Vista de Triana y su vega*, in Francisco Borja de Palomo, *Historia Crítica de las riadas o grandes avenidas del Guadalquivir en Sevilla desde su Reconquista hastas nuestros días* (Seville, 1878).

The building of the city walls to follow the course of the Guadalquivir was an especially important aspect of this nature-governed development. The Roman walls were improved by the city's Islamic rulers. Of the fifteen city gates built into the walls, seven were along the riverfront itself. On the northeastern stretch of the wall, a further five gates ran close to the Tagarete that together with the river's main channel seems almost to encircle the walled city. The city gates therefore had to deal with surging water as one of their main threats. How this was accomplished will be explored in more detail in the final chapter. Here it is necessary only to emphasise that the limits of the city were established by two rivers, a geographic reality that impacted on urban life every day.

Walls were one of the most significant urban structures and landmarks. The sight of a city's walls, and their upkeep and maintenance by urban authorities, was a crucial component of the contemporary understanding of what a 'city' constituted.[36] Indeed, Seville's walls had been a crucial part of the city's iconography since medieval times.[37] Their role was far from just symbolic, however. Even though military aggression was not a major threat to Seville's walls in

[36] Alberto Marcos Martín, 'Percepciones materiales e imaginario urbano en la España moderna', in José Ignacio Fortea Pérez (ed.), *Imágenes de la Diversidad: El Mundo Urbano en la Corona de Castilla (S.XVI-XVIII)* (Santander, 1997), p. 22.
[37] Javier Portús Pérez, 'Algunas expresiones de orgullo local en la Sevilla del Siglo de Oro', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie VII: Historia del Arte*, 4 (1991), p. 138.

the seventeenth century, they fulfilled many practical functions. As a purpose-built 'boundary', they distinguish the urban and the non-urban spheres for contemporaries and modern historians alike, and in the early modern period this had environmental implications. Waste was disposed, when possible, outside the city walls, and harmful industrial processes were frequently located outside their bounds. The production of gunpowder, for example, was initially carried out in cross-river Triana, outside the city walls, and explosive accidents there in 1579 and 1613 saw the factory moved even further out of the city. Soap and pottery production, both creating pollutants, also took place in Triana, and waste was deposited in the river.[38] Yet historians should not overstate the implications of this spatial management of public health. There remained many harmful and contagious activities in the walled city. The construction of new hospitals in the seventeenth century, for example, was the subject of complaints by residents fearful of the bad airs that the sick and dead bodies would produce.[39] The stalls of the fishmongers who operated at Plaza San Francisco produced a foul smell, whilst the ideal of disposing of waste only outside the city walls remained just that, an ideal. Neighbourhoods would commonly dump their waste at the boundary to another parish, a practice that was not organised but carried out by individuals spontaneously, following an unspoken community agreement.[40] Early modern cities were inevitably smelly, and the city walls as barriers for environmental and sanitary management did not prevent this. Extramural areas could also be perceived as spaces where 'deviant' behaviour might flourish more freely, away from the eyes of authority. In the late sixteenth century, eight men were burned alive by the Inquisition, having been found to have met outside the city walls to have sex under the cover of fig trees.[41] Walls could have a powerful impact on moral attitudes and social assumptions. Given that the walls themselves were orientated around the Guadalquivir, it is vital to keep the river in mind, even in histories of urban politics or social histories. The city walls had a vital function in urban metabolic processes, as they were a way for the city council to attempt to control the entry and exit of people and goods into the city. Cattle, fish, meat, and dairy

[38] Díaz Garrido, *Triana y la orilla derecha del Guadalquivir*, pp. 196-7.
[39] Carmona, *Crónica urbana*, pp. 129-31.
[40] Ibid., pp. 21 and 24.
[41] Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* (Princeton, 1990), p. 126.

were all natural items allowed into the city, but the entry of these foodstuffs was still controlled. Potable water flowed into the city along aqueducts that mounted the city walls, yet fluvial water was usually blocked by the city walls and the closable drains at the city gates. At the same time, these walls were the product of a natural environment acting on a specific space.

The relationship between the 'city' and 'nature' was fluid and flexible, defined also by the social and political structures of the city at different moments. Having explored the nature of those political structures earlier in my thesis, particularly the role of the *asistente*, I will now explain what the specific 'environmental' duties of the city council and *asistente* entailed.

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ii. Seville's urban infrastructure and the asistente

Even in pre-industrial Europe, the environment was heavily politicised. Many political decisions had an environmental impact and provoked environmental events – most obviously climate change or disaster – the consequences of which in turn fed back into the political world. In the seventeenth century, Seville was emerging from a sustained and dynamic period of urban expansion, a process which included the redevelopment of public spaces into civic zones that reflected the imperial achievements of the Habsburg monarchs. These developments put additional pressure on the city's infrastructure. The majority of this infrastructure, however – including the city's walls, its main aqueduct, its street paving, its bridge, and most of its wells and fountains – remained either medieval or Roman in design and construction. The legal frameworks governing issues such as water supply were similarly antiquated, and a variety of challenges in the seventeenth century put these physical and organisational structures under repeated strain. There were specific environmental challenges – an intensification of flooding, drought, and cold winters – alongside plague and mid-century warfare. As I described in the previous chapter (pp. 102-11),

there were also intense fiscal demands placed on the city by the crown: these meant that the city council lacked the resources to respond adequately to natural pressures without raising yet more money through extraordinary taxation. Measures taken were frequently short-term as a result, rarely making improvements to physical infrastructure or establishing better practices for the future, and usually only maintaining an inadequate status quo. The *asistente*, as a royally appointed official *in situ* for a brief term might be assumed to have contributed to the short-termism of the decision-making of the municipal government. In fact, some *asistentes* did try to establish more permanent solutions to gaps and problems in the city's infrastructure, although they often ran up against financial limitations or opposition from either city or crown. Their motivations might also have been self-serving, in trying to leave a visible and lasting mark on the city, forever associated with their governance. For more day to day issues of urban maintenance, whilst regular procedures could be carried out with little direct executive intervention from the *asistente*'s office, new legislation was often necessary to respond to particular environmental pressures or specific complaints from residents that might demand an immediate response.

Seville's environmental urban infrastructure principally comprised the city walls and its gates, a wooden pontoon bridge straddling the Guadalquivir (linking the city and Triana), an aqueduct and piping that brought water into the city, and a drainage system of gutters to get unwanted water out again. Within the city walls there were public fountains for drinking water, and paved streets to facilitate ease of movement. The city council was expected to keep this infrastructure running efficiently. Vital economic functions depended on it (the city paving for example was used by merchants bringing food into the city), as did public health. The city council led by the *asistente* also had to maintain public buildings (such as prisons, granaries, and their own council chamber) and dispose, where possible, of urban waste. This subchapter will outline what the specific responsibilities of urban officials were in relation to the environment and the city's infrastructure, and how some of these duties were handled in practice 1621-1700.

a) Seville's urban environment and the city council: challenge and opportunity

Seville's infrastructure had been developed piecemeal over many centuries, with the input of a succession of different cultures and no coherent plan for the kind of demographic growth that the city experienced in the sixteenth century. To maintain the walls, roads, aqueducts, wells, and other built structures and public spaces that might fall into disrepair or suffer damage in times of environmental stress, there were a combination of regular procedures and *ad hoc* measures that in the final analysis all passed through the city council and the office of the *asistente*. The pressure to act was often applied by the city's residents, however, through petitions and the direct complaints of their representatives in the city council, though there was an expectation for the city council to respond. Frequently, however, the city lacked the finances to make the required repairs or improvements, and many of Seville's systems consequently fell into neglect.

In order to put the city's built infrastructure, and the human and political structures which maintained it, into context, it is worth emphasising Seville's physical size. The walled city alone spread out over two hundred and seventy-six hectares, far larger than any other walled city in Spain.[42] Nor was this space regularly laid-out or intuitively organised: Olavide's 1771 street plan (Appendix 2, pp. 256-8) conveys a sense of the complexity of its knotted medieval layout. Additionally, the city council had to govern and support the infrastructure of Triana across the river. There are two particularly relevant implications of Seville's size for the maintenance of its infrastructure. Firstly, it was impossible for the city council and its representatives to monitor and supervise the entire city themselves, so they relied on reports and complaints from local residents, frequently expressed through the *cabildo de jurados* (see p. 33). Secondly, if the city council decided on legislative measures to manage the urban environment, it was very hard to enforce directives across the entire city. For this large space, the city council had only one dedicated employee specifically appointed to manage issues surrounding the city's infrastructure: the *maestro mayor*. The role of the *maestro mayor* will be explained in more detail below (pp. 158-60), but the post combined being the chief architect for the city with providing reports on

[42] Freire, *El Urbanismo de Sevilla*, p. 55.

necessary repairs or improvement works. To carry out environmental policies and maintain the urban infrastructure, the city council and *asistente* would make *ad hoc*, specific arrangements and hire the necessary workers, craftspeople, or street cleaners for each individual job.

As a result, the city council worked under some serious limitations in respect to the urban environment and its infrastructure – spatial, financial and practical. Nevertheless, it was considered a vital function of good government to care for that environment. The *Consejo de Castilla* was accustomed to receiving petitions from around the kingdom of Castile, from urban communities requesting the right to raise taxes to pay for repair works on occasions when municipal finances did not suffice. These petitions would elaborate on the public need for the works: for example, repairing a broken bridge so that trade could resume and protection provided for travellers.[43] These works would often be brought to the attention of the city authorities by concerned residents, and environmental policies were to a large extent promoted from the bottom up. Residents of early modern Seville made frequent complaints about the profusion of rubbish on the city streets, for example, by voicing their grievances to the *cabildo de jurados* who then petitioned the city council.[44] Across the early modern world, environmental policies could be an issue on which urban communities frequently requested greater civic involvement and were often happy to demand more extensive governmental intervention.[45] Without an efficient and healthy urban infrastructure, a city might starve or succumb to drought or plague, so public concern is unsurprising. From the perspective of the political elite such as the *asistentes*, the intellectual traditions that shaped their role also placed health and public order at their centre, with cities and government often both conceptualised as bodies – just as there were 'remedios' for bodily ailments, so were there remedies for political and social challenges.[46] The environment was thus

[43] Francisco Javier Vela Santamaría, 'Las obras públicas en la Castilla del siglo XVII: un gravamen oneroso y desconocido', *Studia historica: Historia moderna*, 32 (2010), p. 139.
[44] Carmona, *Crónica urbana*, pp. 48-9.
[45] See, for example, Skelton, 'Beadles, Dunghills and Noisome excrements', pp. 44-62.
[46] See above, pp. 11, 33 and 93. For an example of this discourse see the 1661 manuscript authored by José Arnolfini de Illescas, reproduced in Hermosa Espeso, *Una mirada a la Monarquía Española*. Again, this sort of thought was prevalent across Europe. For example, see Isla Fay, *Health and the City: Disease, Environment and Government in Norwich, 1200-1575* (York, 2015).

heavily political, and working in government demanded an appreciation of the natural environment and developing climatic conditions.

This demand is reflected in the contents of both Seville's municipal *Ordenanzas* (first printed in 1527) and, for the *asistente*, the *Capítulos de Corregidores* (originally promulgated 1500). Specific environmental stipulations are made in the *Ordenanzas*. Some were simply restatements of the rights to areas of land, and a recommendation that they be maintained and conserved. For example, the city council could issue regulations to manage the fertile Vega next to Triana, and specifically the plantations, olive trees, and vineyards found there.[47] Other stipulations established more specific and regular practices, and on rare occasions the appointment of an urban official. The drains of the city gates, for example, were to be managed by a *tenedor*, who was to be 'una buena persona, de buena vida y fama', and they had to open or close the drains as circumstances might dictate.[48] Such posts were not full time, as they only had to be carried out at specific times, but they indicate the city council's awareness of the need to have structures in place. The city council was required to organise, pay for, and carry out the regular inspecting of the city's paved streets, and then arrange any repairs needed.[49] Whilst regular inspections were not too difficult to organise, the latter part of this brief was a losing battle as from the late sixteenth century onwards the increasing prevalence of horse-drawn carriages intensified the damage caused to the city's paving and the city couldn't pay for needed repairs. This issue is worth exploring in more depth, as it not only demonstrates the challenges of environmental and infrastructural regulation, and how it was seen as a necessary part of good government, but also reveals the opportunities taken by the city government to reinforce and legitimise their authority.

Popular complaints over the condition of Seville's paved streets had been frequent since the sixteenth century. These led to discussions in the city council in 1579 that there should be an attempt to make those in possession of carriages and carts pay for repair works to street paving;

[47] *Ordenanzas de Sevilla*, fo. 105r.
[48] Ibid., fo. 54v. This *tenedor* of the drains had a crucially important role during times of flood, and will be referred to again in Chapter 5 of this thesis.
[49] Ibid., fo. 72r.

but this edict proved beyond the city's means, lacking the manpower to carry out the necessary inspections and collection. It was perhaps also beyond its will: it is not outlandish to presume that some of those using carriages were sat in the council chamber. Touch-ups and improvements made to the paving were accordingly made on an *ad hoc* basis, maintaining small areas, but the city was unable, or unwilling, to plan any city-wide innovations.[50] In one respect, such specifically targeted repairs made sense, as the natural environment acted with varying intensity on different areas. The district of Alameda de Hércules was the lowest lying area of the city; rainwater would pool there after flowing down from other areas, for example, and the surface needed greater attention as a result. The street paving around the Puerta de Carne in the east, and the pontoon bridge in the west, meanwhile, were far busier due to commercial traffic than other streets, so also needed more regular maintenance.

Arrangements continued in this sporadic vein for the duration of the seventeenth century, and a series of royal mandates in 1684-6 regarding the cleaning and maintenance of Seville's streets reveals the persistence of the associated environmental challenges, the human difficulties that intensified them, and the lack of long-term solutions. The city council had initially written to the king in 1677 about cleaning the streets, to which the king replied in terms that clearly demonstrate the monarchy's concern for the condition of the urban environment but also the lack of resources necessary to improve it. The king's response describes how it had been the city council's 'obligacion cuydar de la limpieza de las calles, y plazas della, y de mas sitios publicos' of the city, but because they 'no teniades medios para hazerlo' and had 'antes de muchos años a esta parte traían consigo un empeño muy continuado', it had often not been possible to do so. As a result, the city council had turned to Seville's residents, asking for contributions in a tax that was royally approved on 18 February 1677.[51] This tax, however, was resisted both by the clerical communities of the city, who insisted that without a papal bull in support of the tax they were

[50] See Carmona, *Crónica urbana*, pp. 59-66, for a longer view on the paving of Seville's streets.
[51] *Reales provisiones en que se disponia materia la manera de llevar á efecto el reparo para el servicio de la limpieza, modo de ejecutar la cobranza de aquel, y asignacion de los señores capitulares que por collaciones habian de cuidar de tal propósito*, AMS XII.1.21, fo. 115r-v.

under no obligation to pay,[52] and the city's nobles, who responded in turn by citing ancient privileges which granted them immunity. The crown noted that the burden of paying for street maintenance had in the past fallen on the 'flacos ombros' of the city's poor. In 1681, after further evasion, and additional pressure from Seville's city council, the crown moved to ensure that all residents, 'sin excepcion', were contributing. The *fiscal* of the *Consejo de Castilla* (who oversaw its finance), Alonso Marquez de Prado, asserted that this was to be done out of 'la necessidad publica' and to guard against the 'daño de la salud' of residents.[53] Mary Elizabeth Perry has argued that such royal intervention represented a 'clear victory for secular government', but it is also worth emphasising that environmental policy was an issue on which the civic government of Seville might expect considerable support from the monarchy, and more easily navigate jurisdictional obstacles.[54]

The challenge of keeping the city's paved streets clean and usable did not lessen as a result of this royal intervention. Flooding in 1684 (see below, pp. 239-47) caused immense damage once more to Seville's streets, requiring another round of repair works and cleaning, and thus taxation. Noting that the streets at this time were afflicted 'con muchas inmundicias' – the result of human waste as well as debris deposited by the flood – in requesting aid from the monarchy the city council cited the 'graue perjuizio de la salud publica' and the inconvenience to pedestrians. As a result the new fiscal of the *Consejo*, the marquis of Castrillo, issued a ten-year licence for the local collection of taxes. This was carried through in the same manner as in 1681, 'con toda igualdad, y justificacion, y sin agravio'.[55] Attached to the city's copies of these royal provisions was an order of the *asistente*, detailing how the money needed would be collected from residents. Collection was organised along parish lines, with representatives of both the city council and the *cabildo de jurados* being assigned the task, in small groups, between the different parishes. They were to enter the parishes, bearing a copy of the *auto*, and collect fifty *ducados*

[52] This was a standard response of the clergy when such demands were made of them, and will indeed be seen again in respect to flood damage. See A. Irigoyen López, 'El clero murciano frente a la presion fiscal. Un documento de 1668', *Contrastes: Revista de Historia Moderna*, 11 (1998), pp. 183-208.
[53] *Reales provisiones*, fo. 115v-116v.
[54] Perry, *Crime and Society*, p. 241.
[55] *Reales provisiones*, fo. 117v-118r.

from residents in all parishes for cleaning the streets.[56] The *asistente* and his *tenientes* were not to do any of the collecting in person: while the work was done in the *asistente*'s name and under his authority, the collection was left to the *veinticuatros*, who had more personal connections in the city, who might choose the most efficacious means of raising the money (there was flexibility too in the collection of other royal taxes, see pp. 107-11). The *asistente* did organise this effort, so needed to be aware of how political power was operating spatially within the city. These measures show how challenging it could be to effect even what might be considered simple matters of infrastructural upkeep, requiring pressure from residents, royal approval, and the involvement of much of the municipal government to raise money.

Considering the city council's struggle to clean and repair its paved areas in the 1670s and 1680s, it is also clear that environmental considerations and policies were of vital relevance for early modern urban governments, couched as they were in terms of 'public health' and 'necessity'. Yet the impact of the kind of political challenges imposed by the wider political context is especially apparent in the difficulties the city council faced to fund such works. In a city whose population was already financially exhausted, largely as a result of heavy contributions to the wars of the Habsburgs, the council was unable to pay for basic upkeep without raising yet more money from residents. The unwillingness of Seville's clergy to contribute financially is also significant. As has been established in this chapter, concepts of 'naturalness' were inextricably connected to man's relationship with God. Yet there was a clear concern on the part of Seville's clerics to protect church assets at the expense of public improvements or even the city's defences against disaster.[57] Also apparent is the municipal government's awareness that the poor were disproportionately bearing the sanitary and financial costs of environmental degradation. Urban-natural spaces and the metabolic processes which shaped them were the product of socio-economic dynamics; in Seville's case, this meant that the rich – who frequently had the potential to cause most environmental degradation (as through the use of carriages on paved streets) – could often shift the burden to the less fortunate, whether in terms of money or exposure to unsafe

[56] It was left to the *veinticuatros* to decide who exactly to collect this money from. Ibid., fo. 119r-120v.
[57] This latter point will be even more apparent when analysing the ecclesiastical community's reaction to flooding, see pp. 236-9.

or unsanitary conditions. The urban government was still expected to work to better environmental conditions in the city. The very life of the city's inhabitants depended on these quotidian considerations, and they were vital considerations for the *asistente*.

b) The *asistente* of Seville, the *maestro mayor* and the urban environment

The *asistentes* of Seville were also assigned specific duties concerning infrastructure in the city's *Ordenanzas* in the *Capítulos de Corregidores*, which outlined their responsibilities for the urban environment and its upkeep. The *asistentes*, aware that as a visible potential target for popular ire they might be held directly accountable for environmental problems, took these matters seriously. Nor were the duties trivial. They were connected to the most vital matters of urban government, and depended heavily on the dictates of the natural environment. For example, the *Ordenanzas* of Seville required the *asistente* to ensure that the city's grain mills were well-funded, and that the aqueducts which supplied them with water were kept in operation.[58] The vital political imperative to keep the city well fed was reflected in the environmental expectations of the *asistente*'s role. The *Capítulos de Corregidores* are less specific in their directives but demonstrate how all-encompassing the *asistente*'s authority was in respect to infrastructure and the environment. One of their stated duties was to monitor 'las cercas y muros y cauas y las puentes: y los pontones y alcantarillas y las calçadas en los lugares donde fuere menester y todos los otros edificios y obras publicas y si no estouieren reparadas den orden como se repare con toda diligencia'.[59] There is also however a warning about public works performed at the expense of the *Consejo de Castilla*. The *Capítulos* advise that such works must be carried out with the least cost to the *Consejo*, and that care should be taken that craftspeople and experts be paid only what was necessary so that the work was done well, and that urban governors such as the *asistente* did not give in to excessive demands.[60] *Asistentes* were therefore under royal pressure to maintain the urban environment, but

[58] *Ordenanzas de Sevilla*, fo. 12v.
[59] *Capítulos de Corregidores*, fo. 3v.
[60] Ibid.

be mindful of the costs. Although, as will be seen, much of the direct work was delegated, the buck stopped with the *asistente*.

The *asistente* and his *tenientes*, and indeed other officials of the city council, by and large lacked the technical expertise to deal with most environmental challenges – they were generally legally trained bureaucrats or from the high-nobility, groups among whom such knowledge was rare. They instead relied on the *maestro mayor*, who served as the city council's architect, but also had to keep tabs on the city's infrastructural components and undertake repairs on them as necessary. Fernando Cruz Isidoro has written a comprehensive history of the *maestros mayores* of Seville's cathedral and city council (they each appointed such an individual), and outlined their individual contributions to the city's built structures and infrastructure. The city's *maestros mayores* were chosen by the council in a secret ballot (only a bare majority was required) after potential candidates had submitted written petitions. There was no set term of office: incumbents served until they retired or the council had reason to replace them,[61] and only eight men occupied the post in the seventeenth century. These men were members of the community of *sevillano* craftspeople and, although not always born in Seville itself, their appointment reveals a parochial, inward aspect to Seville's urban life. Whilst in some early modern European countries, experts, engineers and craftspeople were recruited from other countries to deal with specific environmental challenges, in Seville, domestically-trained professionals handled such challenges (considerable as they were).[62] Whilst this was undoubtedly the norm across Europe, in a city with such an international community and where matters of infrastructure concerning the river had a significant impact, it is surprising that foreign expertise was not more actively courted. Perhaps this inclination can be explained by a preference for those with an awareness of and expertise in local materials, or a suspicion of foreign involvement in civic life.

The *maestros mayores* of the city council of Seville had a wide-ranging brief. They were expected to be architects, and had to produce designs for new buildings commissioned by the city

[61] Fernando Cruz Isidoro, *Arquitectura sevillana del siglo XVII. Maestros Mayores de la Catedral y del Concejo Hispalense* (Seville, 1997), p. 160.
[62] For example, see T. Williamson, 'Dutch engineers and the draining of the Fens in eastern England', in Danner, Renes, Touissamt, van de Ven and Zeiler (eds.), *Polder Pioneers: the influence of Dutch engineers on water management in Europe, 1600-2000* (Utrecht, 2006), pp. 103-19.

council; artisans who could design striking ephemeral structures for civic events; and engineers who could attend to the upkeep of already existing civic buildings and make improvements and repairs to the infrastructure of the city. Their role often involved delegating responsibilities to more specialised craftspeople. In the early modern period, there was no legal imperative for the city's craftspeople to work on civic projects for the public good. The second half of the *Ordenanzas* concerned the regulation of professionals and craftspeople in the city, largely establishing the kind of training and licences that were required for individuals to work in different capacities. The stipulations are nevertheless silent on any civic expectations that might fall upon their work. Working on public projects was not an automatic expectation of craftspeople with vital skills, and the *maestros mayores* were therefore necessary as the fulcrum around which infrastructure works could be organised and actualised. From the *asistentes*' perspective, this was another figure with a more permanent grounding in Seville's urban community with whom they had to engage quickly and establish a mutually beneficial working relationship.

The *maestro mayor* would provide the city council, and often the *asistente* directly, with reports on works needed around the city. These might either have been requested by the council, or be submitted following lobbying from a community or individual in the city. An example of the former would be the report made by Pedro Sánchez Falconete (*maestro mayor* of the city council 1630-64) on the repairs needed to the council's own building, submitted on 24 November 1653 following an order from the *asistente*.[63] Falconete reported that some of the drains in the building were 'asolbada y quebrada', many of the doors and windows needed repairing, and that there was much timber and brick in need of being replaced throughout the building. On 24 December Falconete submitted a report of projected costs as a follow-up, on the order of Juan de Lara, then the city's *procurador mayor* (see p. 114), which gives some insight into the scale of the task. A total of eight hundred and ninety-three *reales* was estimated as required, including labour costs (for example, employing a master carpenter, Antonio de Agilar, with a worker for six days at one hundred and eighty-two *reales*), shipping costs (one hundred and sixty-eight *reales*), and

[63] *Varios informes de Pedro Sánchez Falconete en 1653, de las obras que necesitaba las casas de cabildo*, AMS IV.10.104, fo. 415r.

materials (raw materials such as wood and stone, alongside crafted components including nails and hinges).[64] These costs were, as with repair works on other infrastructure, considered extraordinary in terms of the civic budget. They could indeed fall on the *maestro mayor* himself, to be paid up front. In recompense for their work, *maestros mayores* received a yearly salary of three hundred *ducados*, falling to two hundred and fifty later in the century.[65] This was enough to feed a family, and could be supplemented with additional employment; but when *maestros mayores* had to pay for needed works out of their own pocket the effects would be felt keenly. In 1671, for example, Acisclo Burgueño (*maestro mayor* 1670-94) requested money from the city council to cover his expenses arising from the work he had done for the celebrations to mark the canonisation of Ferdinand III that had left him 'pobre'.[66] The financial struggles of *maestros mayores* is an example of the paradoxical expectations and limitations surrounding the management of the urban environment, and must have incentivised a policy to avoid work that would be unprofitable.

Maintaining the urban environment involved several human networks – professional as well as political. Supposedly simple projects, such as repairing a public building, would require multiple resources and their corresponding metabolic processes – for example the shipping of forested wood into the city using the river. The *asistente*, ultimately, was at the centre of this process, but could not and did not impose changes top-down; they relied instead on the expertise and cooperation of other individuals. In this respect, the structures of urban government were similar to the wider political structures we observed earlier in the thesis. How early modern Seville managed its environment was formed by national and local political organisations, but at the same time environmental challenges informed those same organisations. Urban government required engagement with specific, physical spaces and structures that defied categorisation into 'natural' or 'urban' spheres. The environment was an unavoidable and complex political issue,

[64] Ibid., fo. 417r-v.
[65] Cruz Isidoro, *Arquitectura sevillana*, p. 161.
[66] *Memorial de Acisclo Burgueño, maestro mayor de las obras de la ciudad, pidiendo ayuda de costa por sus trabajos en la fiesta el Santo Rey en 1671*, AMS IV.35.38.

which was often managed so as to perpetuate pre-existing political and socio-economic power structures.

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iii. Seville's drinking water: royal privilege, practical challenges and more jurisdictional conflict

As the most fundamental precondition for human society, drinking water is a highly politicised resource. All the other processes in the city depend on the existence of clean drinking water. The concept of urban metabolism remains informative here. As Erik Swyngedouw has illustrated in the case of twentieth-century Guayaquil (Ecuador), 'controlling the flow of water implies controlling the city, as without the uninterrupted flowing of water, the city's metabolism would come to a halt'. Additionally, access to water is 'not a function of its limited availability in nature, but rather ... is socio-economically and politically constructed'.[67] There is increasing research on water supply in early modern cities, and how this issue provides insights into their political and moral cultures. Mark Jenner, for example, has outlined how in the case of early modern London, a medieval sense of civic community around the local, physical mechanisms of drinking water (water conduits) came to be partly supplanted by a more 'capitalist' model of water companies assuming greater control.[68] In the case of early modern Seville, Manuel Fernández Chaves has published both on the physical structures that brought drinking water to the city and on the political, legal, and jurisdictional processes that controlled them.[69] This subchapter will lean heavily on the research of Chaves in seeking to demonstrate how Seville's supplies of potable

[67] Erik Swyngedouw, *Social Power and the Urbanization of Water: Flows of Power* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 2 and 176.
[68] Mark Jenner, 'From conduit community to comercial network? Water in London, 1500-1725', in Paul Griffiths and Mark Jenner (eds.), *Londinopolis: Essays in the cultural and social history of early modern London* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 250-72.
[69] Manuel Fernández Chaves, *Los Caños de Carmona y el abastecimiento de agua en la Sevilla moderna* (Seville, 2011) and *Política y administración*.

water fitted into the wider picture of the *asistente* of Seville as requiring an environmental frame of thought. The challenges included the familiar risk of jurisdictional conflict, and even conflict with the crown itself, in order to represent the interests and needs of the city. I will first describe the infrastructure that the city possessed to keep it supplied with drinking water, and where this water came from. This physical reality was inextricably bound up with the legal and jurisdictional structures that governed it. Beyond the geographical determinant of the Guadalquivir, Seville remained defined by its socio-spatial relationship to water, and the work of the *asistente* was heavily preoccupied with these concerns.

a) Seville's drinking water and royal ownership

Seville's main source of drinking water flowed into the city down a Roman aqueduct, known as the Caños de Carmona, so named after the town where the structure began, some thirty kilometres to the east of the city. It is unknown today where the spring that the water originated from is located, and Morgado's *Historia* indicates that much of the water in fact ran into the Caños from Alcalá de Guadaíra, a town closer to Seville which had a pure spring.[70] However, in the seventeenth century this water flowed into Seville from Carmona down the stone structure, passing over the city walls at the Puerta de Carmona (Figure 9) before being carried to its ultimate destination, the Real Alcázar.[71] Before reaching the palace, however, water was siphoned off in tributary pipes, to destinations both private and public. The distribution of water from the Caños de Carmona was highly politicised and reflected a legal and political framework that was peculiar to Seville, as the rights and privileges attached to this water differed from that of similar supplies in other Castilian towns in one important respect.

[70] Morgado, *Historia de Sevilla*, fo. 49v-50r.
[71] See Chaves, *Los Caños de Carmona*.



Figure 9: Louis Jules Arnout, *Puerta de Carmona en Sevilla* (1842).

Throughout early modern Spain, it was typical for municipalities to possess the rights and jurisdiction over the springs and drinking water that supplied their town or city, a right that had typically been imparted in the *Siete Partidas* following the incorporation of new towns and territories during the Reconquista.[72] In Seville, however, it was the crown that held the privilege to the water that came from Carmona – indeed the crown was considered to 'possess' the water that supplied its royal palace. On the city council fell the obligation to care for and maintain the aqueduct, for which they were granted a share of the income from the *almojarifazgo*.[73] Yet the city was not permitted to take any of the water or use it as a public resource until the fifteenth century, when a concession was made that water from Carmona might run to the monastery at Plaza San Francisco (the future location of the city council) and issue from a fountain for use as

[72] Chaves, *Política y administración*, pp. 23-5.
[73] Ibid., p. 27 and *Ordenanzas de Sevilla*, fo. 6v.

public drinking water.[74] Chaves has demonstrated that such concessions, with the crown granting access to a certain amount of water to specific communities or individuals, were heavily couched in the language of grace, favour, and honour. Initially, from the reign of Ferdinand III (1217-52) to that of Henry IV (1454-74), concessions were granted more or less exclusively to nobles or important servants of the monarchy, before the Catholic Monarchs began to instead favour religious institutions such as churches and monasteries.[75] The language of royal grants of water privileges indicated that the monarchy considered such grants to be ennobling to the city. This monopolising of an essential urban resource as a royal prerogative demonstrates the extent to which the environment was politicised in early modern Seville. The difference between this power structure, explained by the presence of the royal palace, and that followed elsewhere in the Spanish monarchy, is stark. For example, in the Kingdom of Valencia, there were independent local tribunals, unaffiliated with either crown or municipality, which oversaw the legal issues arising from complex rights to water ownership, so that water management remained in the hands of the local community and a wide cross-section of society.[76] Although Valencia was exceptional, in most cases communities had more control over water jurisdictions than in Seville. Additionally, the hydraulic structures involved in the transportation and distribution of water were usually less complicated elsewhere in Castile than in Seville's case, the latter involving a long aqueduct, fountains and wells.[77]

In response, residents of Seville without easy access to this royal water could either seek potable water from other sources, or actively defy and steal from the crown by illegally accessing the water from the Caños de Carmona. There were several other sources of drinking water – public wells and drinking fountains were scattered throughout the city's streets and squares – yet none of them were reliable and hygienic. On the left bank of the Tagarete, outside the city walls, there was a spring under municipal control called the *fuente de Arzobispo* (fountain of the

[74] Chaves, *Política y administratción*, pp. 62-3.
[75] Ibid., pp. 47-50 and 66.
[76] Thomas F. Glick, *Irrigation and Society in Medieval Valencia* (Cambridge MA, 1970), pp. 31 and 65 for example.
[77] Guy Lemeunier, 'Hidráulica agricola en la España mediterránea, S.XVI-XVIII. La formación de los regadíos clásicos', in Carlos Barciela López and Joaquín Melgarejo Moreno (eds.), *El Agua en la historia de España* (Alicante, 2000), pp. 56 and 63-9.

archbishop), providing water of a reasonably good quality.[78] The city council channelled water from this spring as part of their urbanisation of the area of Alameda, the water issuing from public fountains within the city walls. However, piping water like this frequently came at a cost to the water's quality, purity, and healthiness – the water was heavily contaminated by calcium, for example.[79] There were other health concerns surrounding public fountains. A fountain near the Church of All Saints on Calle Feria lacked a suitable runoff, so water pooled and became fetid and stagnant. At Plaza de San Francisco, along with water from the Caños de Carmona, waste water from nearby streets and buildings (including the city prison) flowed into the square's fountain down guttering. The city council, lacking the means to correct this unfortunate topography, struggled to maintain hygienic conditions at one of the city's most central and prominent public fountains.[80] Wells, frequently found in the cramped conditions of the communal *corrales*, were also prone to drying up or at best providing dirty, stagnant water.[81] Public fountains and wells were thus not a reliable source of healthy drinking water and indeed in the seventeenth century could not consistently provide water for a population that had boomed spectacularly in the 1500s.

Away from fountains and wells, Seville's residents collected water directly from the river or its tributary, the Tagarete. The Guadalquivir was polluted by waste dumped upriver and by the fishing industry, and was also silt-heavy. As drinking water, it was dirty and unsanitary. Finally, watersellers operated in the city's streets, squares and markets, selling both regular drinking water and flavoured luxury and medicinal products – water infused with honeysuckle or quince, for example. The city council attempted to fix the price of this water, as with any other product: a list of recommended prices in 1627 established prices for water to be sold by the *azumbre*, a unit of measurement equating to around two litres. Distilled drinking water was two *reales* for an

[78] Carmona, *Crónica urbana*, p. 73.
[79] Ibid., p. 79. The water was contaminated by calcium, along with magnesium, in the subterranean caves the river ran from. L. Díaz Beltrán and R. Jiménez Espinosa, 'Afluencia de la actividad agrícola en la calidad de las aguas subterráneas del acuífero aluvial del Guadalquivir en el sector comprendido entre Mengíbar y Marmolejo (provincia de Jaén)', in J.A. López Geta, J.C. Rubio Campos and M. Martín Machuca (eds.), *VI Simposio del agua en Andalucía. 1 a 3 de Junio 2005, Sevilla* (Seville, 2005), vol. 2, p. 1160.
[80] Carmona, *Crónica urbana*, pp. 81-3.
[81] Morales Padrón, *Historia de Sevilla*, pp. 45-5 and Carmona, *El extenso mundo de la pobreza*, p. 41.

azumbre, whilst orange-blossom or honeysuckle infused water was at the pricier end of the spectrum at six *reales*.[82] Velázquez memorably depicted this profession in his *Waterseller of Seville* (Figure 10), one of the most striking paintings of early modern Spanish art.[83] His choosing a waterseller as a subject might suggest the commonplaceness of such figures, and he lends the profession an austere dignity – perhaps befitting their role selling a life-giving resource. Yet in reality such vendors frequently overcharged for their product, misled customers about their water's origins, and made a profit at the expense of the city council and residents by re-selling water obtained from public fountains.[84] Such illegal activity was hard for the city council to prevent or punish, lacking the manpower or funding to guard or regularly monitor the city's public water infrastructure.



Figure 10: Diego Velázquez, *The Waterseller of Seville* (1618-22).

[82] *Tassa general de los precios*, fo. 165-7.
[83] For the background to this painting see Tiffany, *Diego Velázquez's early paintings*, pp. 77-102.
[84] Carmona, *Crónica urbana*, pp. 73 and 75.

It is hard to gain any accurate impression of how many people relied on these different sources. It is more than likely that a large proportion of the city's population used the Guadalquivir as their principal source of drinking water. What is beyond doubt is that the water from the river and from the majority of public wells and fountains was far less pure and sanitary than that from the Caños de Carmona.[85] The monarch, and the elites to whom he granted water rights, tried to restrict access to the healthiest drinking water, and in doing so exerted their power over the city's relationship to the environment. However, they were frequently defied by the city's residents, who would find ways to help themselves to water from the Caños regardless. This illegal activity would implicate the *asistente*, asked to intervene by the monarchy, as I now describe.

b) The *asistente,* water privileges and jurisdictional conflict

In the seventeenth century, the tendency for Seville's residents to illegally siphon the king's water from the Caños de Carmona was greater than ever, thanks to the city's rapid population growth. The monarchy, to safeguard its own interests, enhanced the powers of the *alcaide* of the Real Alcázar in the 1650s – an official who, as part of a brief to maintain and safeguard the palace, from the reign of the Catholic Monarchs (1479-1516), had jurisdiction on any matter pertaining to the water from the Caños de Carmona. This official, increasingly obliged to intervene in response to what was seen as the theft of water belonging to the king, further complicated the *asistente*'s role and exacerbated jurisdictional conflict. On the issue of water supply, the *asistente* in fact tended to act more as a representative or agent of the city than of the monarchy, able to appreciate the urgent, practical, life and death challenges of water supply. Studying environmental challenges allows historians of early modern European government to appreciate that power could not simply operate in a top down fashion. The physical realities of the urban world and its environment prevented that.

[85] Ibid., p. 71.

As indicated above, the *alcaide* of Seville's Real Alcázar was a royally appointed official who was tasked with overseeing the management, maintenance, and protection of the palace. As this brief was so spatially specific, and confined to a narrow set of interests – that of the monarchy – the *alcaide* was able to act belligerently in its pursuit, frequently alienating the city council of Seville.[86] The *alcaide* was given a vote on the city council during the reign of Catholic Monarchs, which ramped up tensions between the official and the council (a tension both jurisdictional and spatial, with the palace right at the edge of the walled city to the south, and itself walled off from the rest of the city), as they were recruited from outside Seville.[87] Additionally, the *alcaides* frequently carried out their office remotely, as they resided outside Seville for long stretches of their tenure and relied on the reports, complaints and recommendations of palace officials – in contrast to the *asistentes* of the city, who were resident and had to develop a closer appreciation of the urban context. These tensions spilled over into the relationship between the *alcaide* and the *asistente*. From 1621, the post of *alcaide* fell to the perpetual care of the family of the count-duke of Olivares, and the concession of the post specifically stipulated that the *asistente* was not to interfere in the *alcaide*'s work.[88] On the issue of the potable water from the Caños de Carmona, and its fraudulent use, however, the *asistentes* were under considerable pressure from the city council and indeed the city's residents to lessen the impact of the work of the *alcaide*, if not to actively operate against them. The city nobles, whose gardens and townhouses were supplied with water from Carmona (and who frequently took more than their allotted share, if indeed they had been allotted any to begin with), were people the *asistentes* needed to keep on good terms with to ensure their cooperation in other aspects of city life, whilst the environmental imperatives to keep the city supplied with vital resources, keep its urban metabolic processes running and its inhabitants alive, all contributed to their very different perspective on water.

A series of disagreements in the late 1670s demonstrates these tensions and conflicts. From 1652 the position of *alcaide* had been carried out with increasing vigour, following Luis Mendéz de Haro's appointment to the post after Olivares. Méndez de Haro (1598-1661) was

[86] Chaves, *Política y administración*, p. 107.
[87] Ibid., pp. 109 and 115-7.
[88] Ibid., p. 234.

Olivares's nephew; he had also succeeded his uncle as *valido* of Philip IV. One of his first acts as *alcaide* of the Real Alcázar was to carry out a full-scale investigation into the water from the Caños de Carmona, including the scale of fraud it was subject to. These surveys concluded that two hundred and twenty-five *pajas* were being siphoned off the Caños illegally, from the total flow of water of around seven hundred *pajas* – a huge proportion, if the calculation was correct. A *paja* was essentially a measurement of area indicating the circular size of a pipe, although this measurement could vary based on urban context – a *paja* in Madrid was different to a *paja* in Seville.[89] In Seville, a household having access to one *paja* would have access to two hundred litres of water a day provided there was continual flow.[90] This complicated Luis de Haro's survey, but its compilers, Íñigo de Acevedo and Juan Francisco de Navarrete, judges of the *Real Audiencia*, estimated the *per annum* cost to the monarchy at between two hundred and twenty-five to two hundred and seventy thousand *ducados*. As a result Navarrete was given licence by the king to access the city council's archive and investigate the paperwork surrounding water sales and transactions – a direct intrusion on the part of the monarchy into municipal government.[91] Although no active measures were taken at this juncture, the investigative flurry continued in 1667 with another water audit conducted by Francisco Fernández Marmolejo, *teniente* to then-*alcaide* Gaspar de Haro (son of Luis de Haro), who concluded that two hundred and twenty-eight *pajas* were being fraudulently siphoned.[92] The city responded by conducting its own investigation into water supply, bemoaning in 1672 the lack of water in the public fountains of the city.[93] It might be assumed, following the plague of 1649 and the drastic reduction in population it caused, that there would be less pressure on water supply. But a number of dry years, combined with the

[89] Square, rather than cubic, units continued to be used throughout this period, which has been explained partly by the desire of academics to protect their established methods, despite a concern of the governing elite to update them. See Vera S. Candiani, *Dreaming of Dry Land: Environmental Transformation in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, 2014), pp. 116-7.
[90] Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 48.
[91] Chaves, *Política y administración*, pp. 247-63.
[92] Ibid., p. 267.
[93] Ibid., p. 268.

continual deterioration of the urban water infrastructure due to a lack of investment, ensured that there was no respite for the city council and *asistente*.[94]

In a context of meagre public funds, harvest failure, and the continual threat of plague, royal aggression regarding water was met with increasing hostility. Resentment spilled over in 1675, as the city council tried to block officials from the royal palace from conducting an inspection of how water was being distributed at the Puerta de Carmona, even throwing the palace *escribano* into a prison cell when they were defied. In response to this provocative behaviour, a series of orders were sent from court to the *asistente*, Carlos de Herrera Ramírez de Arellano, demanding that he arrange the release of the scribe and recognise the jurisdiction of the palace officials in respect to water.[95] 1677 saw further provocation, however, as the city council built a new door in the palace walls, to directly access the water contained there. The *asistente* initially resisted orders from the *Consejo de Castilla* to halt this work and it was only with the intervention of the *regente* of the *Real Audiencia*, Andrés de la Concha, as mediator that this struggle, in which the *asistente* acted on the side of the city, that the dispute was resolved and the city's intrusion halted.[96] Andrés de la Concha became interim *asistente* himself in 1680 and again in 1683, whilst retaining his post as *regente*; Chaves credits him with stopping the antagonistic practices of the city council such as those described above, and cites de la Concha's work as an example of the positive impact that the two posts being united under one figure might bring, encouraging greater cooperation between city and *Audiencia*. As a result of the cooling of hostilities, the city was granted a privilege to divert some royal water to its slaughterhouse.[97] This hardly solved the bigger issue of a lack of clean drinking water, however, a problem that remained unresolved in the early modern period. As we saw in Chapter 2 (pp. 91-100), the union of *asistente* and *regente* into one post was an arrangement that the government of King Philip IV had considered on two occasions, being deterred by the fierce opposition of the city council most especially. The issue of

[94] Parker, *Global Crisis*, p. 286.
[95] Chaves, *Política y administración*, pp. 272-3. Arellano was later appointed to the *Real Cámara*, but the city council tried to delay this reshuffle (as we saw in Chapter 2 p. 84), evidence perhaps that the council valued Arellano as an *asistente* who they felt represented their interests.
[96] Ibid., pp. 273-4.
[97] Ibid., p. 274.

Seville's water supply demonstrates that jurisdictional issues could have a real impact on the city's built infrastructure and its relationship with the environment.

Water is highly political. In early modern Seville a royal monopoly on access to the purest drinking water, which palace officials struggled to enforce, contributed to a conflict-prone environment where water management sharply reflected social and political power. Water scarcity was a function of both 'human' and 'natural' factors – lack of investment in infrastructure and priority access to the elites on the one hand, the effects of an increasingly dry climate on the other. This chapter will conclude by exploring another matter on which the human and the natural contributed to define the issue – the city's bridge across the Guadalquivir.

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iv. The 'puente de barcos' and Diego Hurtado de Mendoza's plans for a stone bridge for Seville in 1631

Seville's relationship with its environment in the seventeenth century was far from a simple process of urbanisation. Nature shaped the city and the lives of its inhabitants as much as the city urbanised nature. Indeed, early modern Spanish thought did not differentiate rigidly between nature and human society, having a definition of naturalness that was inseparably connected with religious thought (see above, p. 141). The city's development around the river and its built infrastructure reflected this spatial reality. The city council was expected to maintain and, where possible, extend this infrastructure, requiring an awareness of the natural environment, its spaces and processes, which linked it inextricably with the life of Seville. These considerations were heavily politicised, and issues such as the supply of drinking water to the city could provoke tension and conflict from multiple actors: city officials, royal officials, and residents both poor and rich. Many of these themes, already outlined in this chapter, will be developed further as we turn to consider an issue that has so far been conspicuously absent from my analysis – how the Guadalquivir River was traversed by the city inhabitants. In particular I will highlight the

importance of the city's wooden pontoon bridge and its upkeep. A plan devised in 1631 to replace the wooden bridge with a stone one, suggested on this occasion by the *asistente* Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, again demonstrates the interplay between politics and the environment, as well as revealing further cultural and political assumptions about environmental issues.

Mendoza, the viscount of Corzana, had become *asistente* in 1629. His appointment was a result both of his extensive experience in governmental posts – he was *corregidor* of Toledo from 1621 to 1628 and a special ambassador to England in 1623 – and of his lineage. He was perceived as a committed and loyal royal servant by Philip IV and his *valido* Olivares.[98] The late 1620s and early 1630s was the time of Olivares's greatest influence over affairs in Spain. A spirit of improvement and reform permeated the political climate, inspired on the one hand by the dominant figure of Olivares himself, and on the other by the warnings and pessimism of the *arbitristas*. Rather than being spurred on by societal self-confidence, moves toward reform in early seventeenth-century Spain were driven by a dissonant blend of feelings of pride and inadequacy.[99] Mendoza's proposal to build a stone bridge to replace the existing wooden pontoon bridge across the river – made as a direct appeal to Olivares – reflected these parallel sensations and highlighted the ways in which environmental and infrastructural policy might react to and be determined by the wider political and social context. Mendoza's proposal ultimately failed, and the Guadalquivir at Seville remained traversed by only a wooden bridge until 1852. The building of a stone bridge, as I will explain below, had been a long-running ambition of the city authorities; yet Mendoza's proposal owed more to his personal ambitions and the specific, wider political atmosphere of his years in office – with Olivares at its centre – than to long-running environmental priorities. The failure of the project to get off the ground also had multiple causes, revealing longer-term natural challenges, rivalries between cities, and the difficulties of funding ambitious civic projects in a century where public finances were bled dry by royal demands and warfare.

[98] See Chapter 2, p. 77.
[99] Elliott, 'Self-perception and Decline', p. 252.

a) Seville's pontoon bridge



Figure 11: The Puente de Triana. Detail of Braun, *Urbium Praecipuarum Totius Mundi* (1594).

The wooden Puente de Triana was of central importance to Seville; connecting the two banks of the river that ran through the city, it was a vital tether that facilitated movement and exchange. Yet the bridge also highlights some of the incongruous and even contradictory aspects of the city's relationship with its natural environment. Entirely reliant for its industry, wealth and fame on the river, Seville's leaders were unable to develop structures befitting the river's vital importance.

The pontoon bridge had, admittedly, served the city well for several centuries. The bridge crossed the river at the northern end of El Arenal, and on the eastern side, reaching Triana, its approach was dominated by the presence of the Castillo de Triana, headquarters of the city's inquisitorial tribunal (Figure 11). The bridge, constructed out of the wooden hulls of thirteen ships strung together, with wooden planks across the top, had been put together initially by the city's Islamic rulers in 1171. As with the Caños de Carmona, the medieval Christian kings of Seville had inherited a key piece of infrastructure from the city's non-Christian rulers, and they invested heavily in its upkeep.[100] The *Ordenanzas* for the city (reprinted in 1632, also during Diego Hurtado de Mendoza's tenure as *asistente*) contains a section across three folio sheets outlining

[100] Díaz Garrido, *Triana y la orilla derecha del Guadalquivir*, p. 71.

the measures that the city was to take to maintain the bridge and regulate its use. This section begins:

> El señor Rey don Alonso, considerando antiguamente ser cosa muy ncessaria y prouechosa, que la puente de Triana estouiesse siempre conseruada, hizo vna ordenança, el tenor de la qual es este que se sigue.[101]

The *Ordenanzas* stipulate that the bridge required a regular supply of 'barcos, y madera, y ancoras, y guiminas prestas, y todas las otras cosas que son menester', so that 'passen los omes, y las bestias, y lo que traxeren, sin precio ninguno'.[102] The constant provisioning of the bridge with wood in particular shows that the relationship between 'city' and 'nature' was a process of more or less permanent renegotiation, and reveals the fragility of the systems and structures through which the city managed the river. The task of maintaining the bridge and supplying what was necessary for its repair was assigned to specific individuals called *arrendadores* (post-holders), who were granted a salary each year by the city council in return for providing for the bridge's upkeep and repair.[103] The *Ordenanzas* neither stipulated for the specific salary received by the *arrendadores* nor indeed how many officials there should be, only mandating that they perform this role for seven years after being initially selected, and that in the event of not being paid by the city council for their services, they had the right to abdicate their responsibilities without consequence.[104] Given the list of potential costs involved in maintaining the bridge, and despite the lack of a detailed breakdown of wages paid to the *arrendadores* in the seventeenth century, it can be assumed that the expenses involved would have surpassed the reimbursement received from the city council. In 1578, for example, *asistente* Francisco Zapata de Cisneras y Osorio, the count of Barajas (1520-94), complained that the city was spending three thousand *ducados* annually on the bridge's upkeep.[105] These expenses only increased in the seventeenth century as the climate became more challenging and damaging and the river flowed in an increasingly

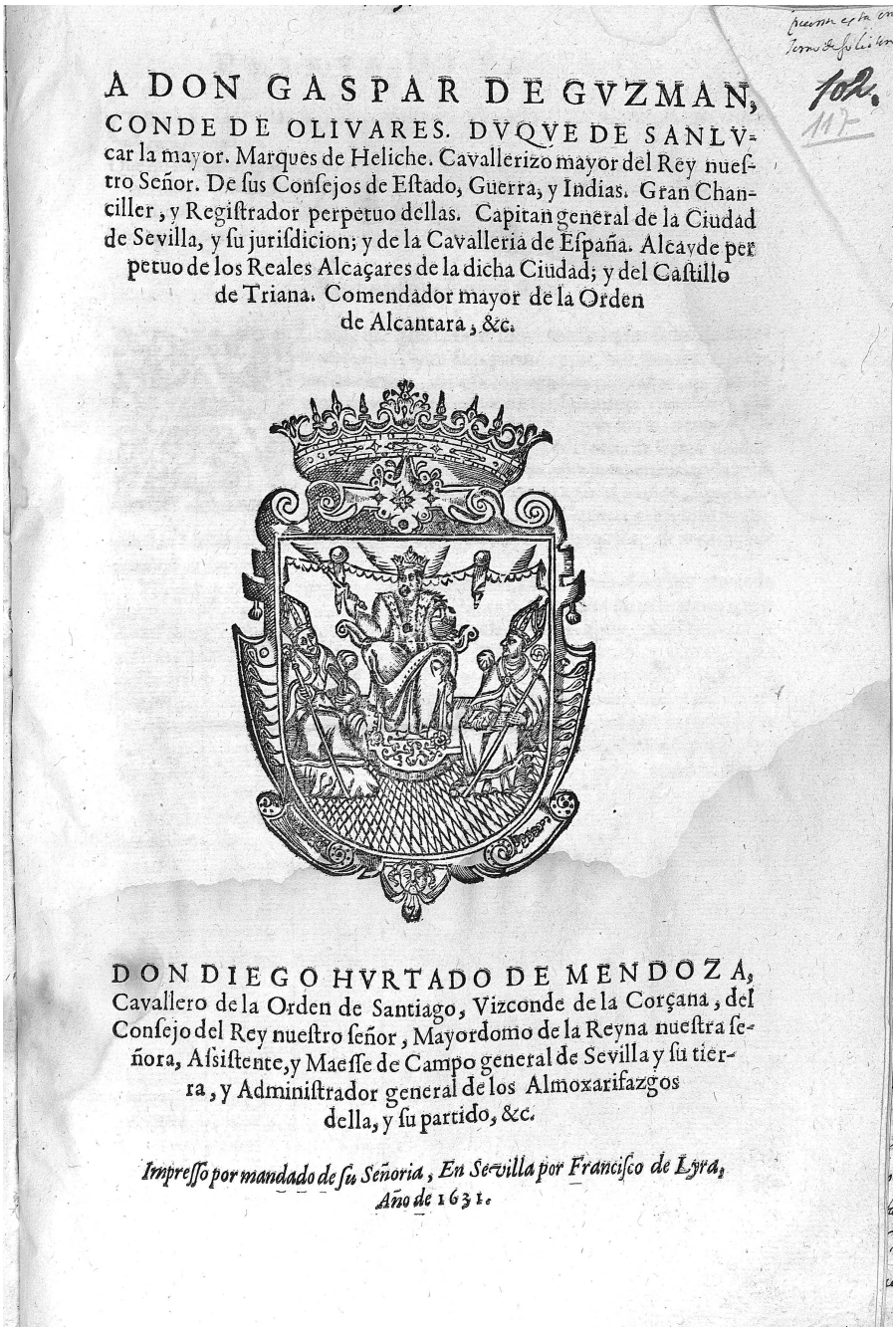
[101] *Ordenanzas de Sevilla*, fo. 25v.
[102] Ibid.
[103] A direct translation of 'arrendadores' might be 'lease-holders' or 'tenants', but in this case 'post-holders' expresses more its usage in this text. Ibid., fo. 27r.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Cited in Freire, *El Urbanismo de Sevilla*, p. 109.

violent fashion.[106] The high costs of repair were indeed one of the reasons why it was seen as appealing for the city to upgrade its wooden bridge to a stone structure, which could better resist the surges of the river. Such proposals had been made before Diego Hurtado de Mendoza in 1631, and the issue continued to be discussed in the second half of the sixteenth century, as Seville's silver-fuelled prosperity was in its fullest flush. The idea was not pursued, however, owing to obstacles that would raise their head again in the 1630s: the high costs of the work and the technological challenges of building a stone bridge across such a broad river with an unstable bed proved insurmountable.

b) Mendoza's 1631 proposal: arguing for a stone bridge

Mendoza's suggestion to construct a stone bridge across the Guadalquivir was far from original. Yet how his proposal was framed is instructive about the concerns of early modern urban statesmen, their awareness of natural challenges, and how in attempting to overcome them they brought into play other metabolic processes between the urban and natural world whilst responding to specific political circumstances. The proposal also contributed to an awareness that developing mastery over the environment was not only a necessary aspect of political power, but could also add grandeur and legitimacy to that power and be incorporated into a regime's iconography and symbolism.

[106] Francisco Borja de Palomo, *Historia Crítica de las riadas o grandes avenidas del Guadalquivir en Sevilla desde su Reconquista hastas nuestros días* (Seville, 1878), pp. 193-4.



A DON GASPAR DE GVZMAN,
CONDE DE OLIVARES. DVQVE DE SANLV-
car la mayor. Marques de Heliche. Cavallerizo mayor del Rey nueſ-
tro Señor. De ſus Conſejos de Eſtado, Guerra, y Indias. Gran Chan-
ciller, y Regiſtrador perpetuo dellas. Capitan general de la Ciudad
de Sevilla, y ſu juriſdicion; y de la Cavalleria de Eſpaña. Alcayde per
petuo de los Reales Alcaçares de la dicha Ciudad; y del Caſtillo
de Triana. Comendador mayor de la Orden
de Alcantara, &c.

DON DIEGO HVRTADO DE MENDOZA,
Cavallero de la Orden de Santiago, Vizconde de la Corçana, del
Conſejo del Rey nueſtro ſeñor, Mayordomo de la Reyna nueſtra ſe-
ñora, Aſiſtente, y Maeſſe de Campo general de Sevilla y ſu tier-
ra, y Adminiſtrador general de los Almoxarifazgos
della, y ſu partido, &c.

Impreſſo por mandado de ſu Señoria, En Sevilla por Franciſco de Lyra,
Año de 1631.

Figure 12: Title page to Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, Assistente y Maestre de campo general de Sevilla, *A Don Gaspar de Guzman, Conde de Olivares ... (Carta justificativa de la necessidad para Sevilla de que se construya un puente sobre el Guadalquivir)* (Seville, 1631).

The surviving evidence for Mendoza's proposal is restricted to the open letter he authored, addressed to Olivares, outlining the arguments in favour of the construction and including a schematic drawing of the planned bridge itself (Figure 12). There are no traces of any discussions of the project in the Council of Castile's records, nor do the papers of Seville's city council offer any further insights. Yet the text that we do have is informative of both the practical benefits and

challenges, and the wider intellectual and ideological framework. It was produced at the printing house of Francisco de Lyra, a printer active on Calle Sierpes (one of the principal commercial streets running off the Plaza San Francisco) between the 1620s and 1640s. De Lyra had a diverse output: alongside a raft of religious texts, he also published Figueroa's *El Enbaxador*, discussed above (pp. 139-40). Most crucially for the bridge proposal, Lyra was someone who was trusted by Seville's political establishment. In 1626, in the aftermath of Seville's most damaging flood of the early modern period, the office of the then-*asistente* Fernando Ramírez Fariñas used Lyra's house to print an officially-endorsed account of the flood, which described the defence efforts made by the *asistente*-led city council, exonerating them of any blame for the damage done to the city.[107] Mendoza was therefore using a printer with a prior relationship with former *asistentes*, further evidence of the range of relationships that these officials had to cultivate, and of their dependence on local cooperation. There were potential benefits to using a trusted and politically safe printer – printing was one of the trades most impacted by the Inquisition, so using someone known to be reliable minimised the risk of intervention by the local tribunal, whilst a closer involvement with specific individuals would facilitate a greater level of control over the final product and potentially more favourable rates.[108]

The text itself is in folio, five sides of text following on from the title page (Figure 12). In the text, Mendoza addresses his proposal directly to Olivares, and a key part of his pitch is to emphasise the power and stability of the current regime and of the Habsburg monarchy in general, in contrast to the previous rulers of the city. Whilst the Romans, according to Mendoza, had not enjoyed enough years of peace to construct a bridge, the Goths had not been builders, and the Moors had been too divided by internecine warfare, the current Habsburg rulers by contrast were 'poderosissima', and were thus in a position to construct a stone bridge across the Guadalquivir.[109]

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[107] See Chapter 5, pp. 224-31.

[108] Francisco de Lyra was one of the most prolific of seventeenth-century *sevillano* printers, publishing a diverse range of materials. The extent and scope of the activity may have made him an obvious choice for the authorities, whilst his influence may have been such that he had connections to the civic elite of the city. See Domínguez Guzmán, *La imprenta en Sevilla en el siglo XVII*, pp. 25-7.

[109] *A Don Gaspar de Guzman, Conde de Olivares ... (Carta justificativa de la necessidad para Sevilla de que se construya un puente sobre el Guadalquivir)*, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, Assistente y Maestre de campo general de Sevilla (Seville, 1631), fo. 2v.

Furthermore, there was a 'hijo y vezino' of Seville at the centre of that monarchy in the form of Olivares, 'acerca de la persona del mayor Monarca del mundo', who was appealed to specifically to grant the Andalusian city what might help it realise its greatness. These appeals were reinforced by highlighting that Seville's lack of a stone bridge could result in unfavourable comparisons with other European cities. Mendoza's international experience and metropolitan outlook can also be detected when he wondered why Seville, as magnificent a city as it is, did not have a stone bridge across the river 'como se las an puesto en Europa a los mayores della en sus provincias'. He gives the examples abroad of London, Paris, the cities of the Danube in Germany and, within Spain itself, of the Tagus and the Duero; he claims he is often asked why Seville was not similarly supported by a stone bridge.[110] He goes on to argue that with the building of a stone bridge, Seville would be able to redouble its communications with the rest of the world, and ships would be able to more easily reach its banks. Mendoza also frames the project in environmental and almost teleological terms, by claiming that 'el animo de Sevilla' had been so excited in this endeavour that not even the opposition 'ya de la mar, ya de la tierra, ya del cielo' working together would be enough to stop it.[111] This language fits in with the early modern Spanish conception of the 'natural' that I described earlier in this chapter – there was nothing 'unnatural' in redeveloping nature to suit human ends; indeed this process was perfectly natural.

In the context of presenting a case to the court of the Habsburg monarchy, additionally, there was a political value to emphasising potential victories and conquests, even over nature. Such arguments contributed to a developing iconography in which mastery over nature allowed the Habsburg monarchs to form closer associations with what they saw as their ancient, mythical antecedents. The figure of Hercules is demonstrative of this. From the rebranding of the 'laguna' of Seville as the Alameda de Hercules in Philip II's reign (see above pp. 141-2), we know that this hero was a symbol both of the city (as its supposed mythical founder) and Charles V (and by extension his dynasty), whose epic achievements were supposedly the match of that hero's own. By using Herculean imagery, however, the Habsburgs also implicated the environment. In the

[110] Ibid., fo. 2r.
[111] Ibid.

Buen Retiro palace, constructed in Madrid under Olivares's instigation from 1629, the *Salón de Reinos* (the palace's throne room) was decorated with paintings that depicted the glorious achievements of the Spanish Habsburgs (most famously Diego Velázquez's *The Surrender of Breda*). Above the windows of this room there was a series of paintings by Francisco de Zurbarán which illustrated several of the labours of Hercules as well as that hero's death. Among these were labours that showcased Hercules' power to reshape nature: *Hercules diverting the river Alpheus* (Figure 13) and *Hercules closes the straits of Gibraltar* (both 1634). In analysing this palace, Jonathan Brown and J.H. Elliott posit that the former 'may be intended to suggest the act of purifying the world of discord', with Hercules more generally serving as a conqueror of discord. Brown and Elliott place this primarily in the context of religious discord and rebellion, but a more literal interpretation might be consistent with that symbolism.[112] The power to modify and exert control over the landscape reflected the ambitions and grandeur of the monarchy. Hercules had already emerged as the symbol of one natural-urban transformation in early modern Seville, and it is not a massive leap to suppose that Mendoza believed his plans were similarly Herculean, considering them as he did to be 'obra tan eroyca'.[113]

[112] Jonathan Brown and J.H. Elliott, *A Palace for a King: The Buen Retiro and the Court of Philip IV* (London, 1990), pp. 157-61.
[113] *Carta justificativa*, fo. 2r.



Figure 13: Francisco de Zurbarán, *Hércules desvía el curso del río Alfeo* (1634).

Mendoza's proposals present more practical and prosaic reasons for the construction of a stone bridge. These reasons are more closely connected to the challenges of urban government and the infrastructural issues explored earlier in this and previous chapters. The first such reason was that the city would save money in the long run, as the constant repairs that the pontoon bridge necessitated were costing the city six thousand *ducados* annually (according to Mendoza a doubling of the costs since 1578). A reliable bridge across the Guadalquivir is also described as vital for the city's regular supplies of provisions. Mendoza cited an estimated calculation that three thousand beasts of burden crossed the bridge each day and pointed out that the bridge formed part of the route of those travelling to Extremadura and Portugal, causing more wear and tear. Given the vital importance to the *asistente*'s work of keeping the city supplied with food (see pp. 118-22), a concern with provisioning here is unsurprising. The constant traffic across the bridge meant that it was rarely in good condition; individual boats frequently had to be replaced,

and the constant, hurried repairs meant that the boarding over the top of the boats base was uneven and had gaps between planks. These gaps not only hindered smooth travel across the bridge but were hazardous. As Mendoza noted, too, the pontoon bridge did not have barriers along its sides which, coupled with the uneven boarding, meant that people regularly fell into the river, especially at night. Additionally, baggage was lost over the sides when the traffic was especially busy.[114] The limitations of the pontoon bridge had implications for the welfare of residents and visitors, and for the economic vitality of the city. As we have seen, these concerns were within the *asistentes*' remit. There were also more specific seasonal and climatic considerations. Mendoza explained how in winter, when there was rain, the water levels rose so that the river lapped dangerously around the edges of the bridge (compounding the problems above), and that it also pooled around the two ends, blocking access for beasts of burden and carriages, and even making travelling across on foot a considerable challenge. A stone bridge to replace the wooden one was thus a solution to practical problems as well as symbolically significant for the Habsburg monarchy, in a city which purported to embody its imperial achievements.

[114] Ibid., 3r, for all of the above.

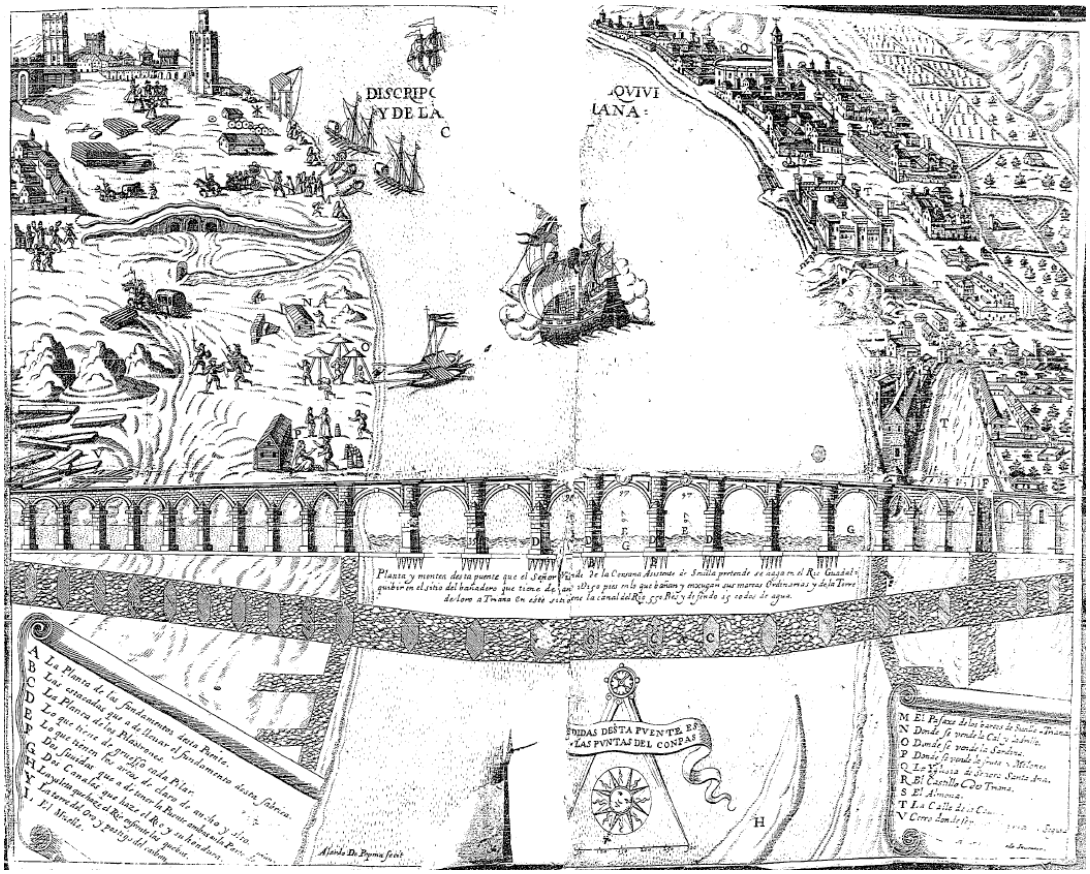


Figure 14: Andrés de Oviedo, drawing that accompanied Hurtado de Mendoza's 1631 proposal for a stone bridge.

The schematic drawings reveal the specifics of the plan (Figure 14). Designed by Andrés de Oviedo, then *maestro mayor* of the city council, the plan shows how the stone bridge was not placed to be at the same site as the pontoon bridge, but rather a short distance upriver (so less central to the city).[115] One reason for this location was to lessen the impact of a potentially harmful consequence of a stone bridge: by adding the volume of its supporting pillars to the river, it was feared that the overall water level would rise and flood into the city's neighbourhoods. By placing the bridge further north (towards the Puerta Real but not beyond the small islet in the middle of the river – see Olavide's street plan, Appendix 2), where the river was wider and there was more space on the river's banks, the bridge would help to diffuse and calm strong flows of

[115] Cruz Isidoro, *Arquitectura sevillana*, p. 207.

water.[116] Additionally, the old bridge would have to remain in use whilst the new one was constructed.

The proposed bridge was to comprise of twenty-five arches, running to some four hundred and fifty metres across, and was to be equipped with reinforced pillars for when the river ran at its strongest. The context of the damaging flood of 1626 was the vital consideration here, which Mendoza emphasised. His plan, he explained, which incorporated the building of a channel that would drain/divert some water from the main course of the river on its west side before it reached Triana, would lessen both the amount of water flowing through the city and the destructiveness of the surges. During times of flooding, it might even be possible that ships could continue to set out across the river, something that had been completely out of the question before.[117] I will discuss the drastic impact of floods on the city and the political implications of this disaster in Chapter 5; it is enough here to emphasise that the 1631 bridge proposal was a response to both short-term trauma and a long-term structural deficiency. Governing early modern Seville required a keen engagement with environmental issues; in formulating his proposals Mendoza had considered the specifics of how the Guadalquivir River flowed through the city, had developed a spatial understanding of how the city's environment impacted on urban government, and had liaised with a variety of technical experts and other professionals – including the printer Francisco de Lyra – to produce his plans.

c) Obstacles and solutions

After explaining the evident advantages to the city from building a stone bridge, both in terms of wider prestige and practical benefits, Mendoza explained the obstacles that made its construction a challenge. He did not downplay the seriousness of the many difficulties that would have to be resolved for the project to be a success. Most of these concerned the technical challenges of engineering that would in the event prove beyond the capacity of seventeenth-century Spain, but

[116] *Carta justificativa*, fo. 3r-v.
[117] Ibid., fo. 3v.

they also demonstrated the extent to which Mendoza had grappled with the practical challenges of such an ambitious project of civic improvement.

Mendoza gave a list of four key obstacles to the bridge's construction. First was 'la nimia hondura' of the river, which was only three *estados* at its middle point as it curved through Seville (each *estado* was equivalent to just over two metres). He explained that, in contrast, the bridge of Zuaço across the Guadalquivir in the territory of Cádiz was built in water double this depth, and that the shallowness of the river at Seville (exacerbating the risk of flooding) made any bridge constructed less stable. The second obstacle was 'la rapida velocidad de las impetuosas aguas' near the city which made it hard to install the necessary machinery to undertake the bridge's construction, as they were at risk of being swept away by the current. Third, 'la falta de cimiento fixo en su profundo' again risked compromising the structural integrity of any bridge built, although Mendoza went on to elaborate that there were indicators that the riverbed might be more secure than it seemed. He noted that the Castillo de Triana, housing the Inquisition, had stood for hundreds of years with its foundations in the side of the river, even pointing out where its walls were marked by flooding. The walls of the city too, where they ran close to the course of the river, showed visible signs of having been hit by floods, and yet had remained standing over the centuries. He also explained that the potters of the city, who transported their wares to more remote parts of the river and knew its layout, had the expertise to know where a ship might lay an anchor and provided testimony that the soil was firm enough. Finally, the fourth problem identified by the *asistente* was 'la falta de caudal con que emprender una obra tan de grande Rey, o de grande ciudad', a problem exacerbated by the great distance, it was assumed, from which many of the materials would have to be brought.[118] Mendoza estimated that five hundred and six thousand *ducados* each year would be needed while the bridge was being constructed, although he does not provide a firm estimate of when the work could be completed, saying only 'El tiempo que avra menester esta puente para su fabrica, no podra ser mucho'.[119] The extra detail provided

[118] Ibid., fo. 2v.
[119] Ibid., fo. 3r.

in his consideration of these problems demonstrates how crucial Mendoza believed they were to the success or failure of the project.

The obstacles were thus extensive, but on the issue of finance and supplying the materials, Mendoza had a list of suggestions that highlight how such urbanisation projects were connected to other metabolic processes in the city and implicated other environmental and governmental concerns. He first addressed the presumed problem of where the materials were to come from, arguing that there was in fact suitable stone close by that could be used: stone at Alcalá del Río (about eighteen kilometres away) could be used for the parts of the bridge that would be under the line of the water, whilst at Utrera and Espera (thirty and seventy-three kilometres away respectively) there were 'excelente' quarries that could provide the rest. The river itself allowed for these materials to be transported to Seville.[120]

Mendoza then proposed a number of fiscal measures to cover the rest of the cost. These involved both the introduction of new charges and the redirection of funds from already existing taxes. The new taxes took for the form of a general tax of two *maravedís* for every pack animal that passed through the city gates, more specific tariffs on livestock and consumable goods, and a fee to be paid by selected businesses in the city. For every hundred sheep brought into the city, their owners were to be charged one *real*, whilst for cattle the charge was two *maravedís.* Each measure of wine (*arroba*), meanwhile, was to be charged at eight *maravedís*. Additionally, one *real* would be paid each month by every tavern, inn, and pastry shop, whilst for the six months of 'verano' the vendors of the honey-wine drink *aloja* would also pay one *real* per month. These charges represented a significant levy on some of the most fundamental products of not only the early modern economy of Seville, but also the diet of its inhabitants. Meat, along with bread, was the central component of the early modern Spanish diet.[121] By suggesting that meat be taxed heavily, the *asistente* was proposing that one of the most essential urban metabolic processes, keeping the city fed and supplied with food, be turned towards the improvement of its civic infrastructure and its urban expansion, whilst arguing that those who benefited from the new

[120] The text does not provide the distances. Ibid., fo. 3r.
[121] Santamaría Arnáiz, 'La alimentación', p. 312. See Chapter 3.

bridge (because it would enable cheaper and more reliable supplies from elsewhere) should pay for it.

Mendoza's suggestions for the reassignment of pre-existing taxes, meanwhile, implicated the proposal for a stone bridge in Seville in a wider context of urban rivalry and indicated how the royal court might prioritise its spending on the cities of the realm. One such proposed change concerned a tax raised on fish in the city. Previously, this money had been spent on 'las fortificaciones de Cádiz', which had just been completed; Mendoza asked that this tax, amounting to twelve thousand *ducados* annually, should now be redirected to pay for Seville's stone bridge. Cities essentially competed against each other for the court to grant them approval to fund various projects. That Seville had helped to pay for improvements at Cádiz meant that they contributed directly to the latter city's taking over the New World trade at the end of the century.[122]

Royally appointed governors such as the *asistente* had a key role in advocating the cause of their cities in such matters, as did the agents employed by city councils to represent them at court. Although in the case of Mendoza's bridge proposal, evidence of petitioning at court does not survive, the city's agents (see p. 34) were generally employed to push for the city's interests and were often the quickest and most immediate source of news. In 1624, for example, the city's agent Fernando Saavedra Monsalve (previously a *veinticuatro* in the city council) had reported to the city council on the appointment of Francisco Dávila, the marquis of Puebla, to the post of *asistente* on 5 November.[123] *Asistentes* did not have a simple relationship with these agents, who were often members of Seville's nobility, whose cooperation with *asistentes* extended only so far as it served their interests. The fate of projects such as Mendoza's stone bridge might depend as much on court politics as they did on need, viability, and logistical concerns.

[122] Santamaría, 'Las obras públicas', p. 157.
[123] Fernando Saavedra Monsalve to city council, 1624, AMS IV.5.56. See AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp.14 and 16-17 for Dávila's appointment and subsequent withdrawal.

d) An unrealised vision

Mendoza's proposals were ultimately fruitless. Seville remained without a stone bridge until the nineteenth century, when the Puente de Isabel II was built on the site of the old pontoon bridge in 1852. Because the records of any decision made do not survive, it is impossible to know exactly why the project was rejected. The technical challenges, most notably the loose soil at the bed of the river, were possibly insurmountable. The silting of the river, which made it increasingly difficult to bring ships into the city and would eventually contribute to the moving of the New World trade to Cádiz, meant any construction project in the bed of the river problematic. The financial costs were also prohibitive. As has been seen, the city council lacked the public funds necessary even to repair damaged street paving without raising extra taxes, so the building of a stone bridge would have required exceptional fiscal effort in the city, reflected in the far-reaching measures proposed by Mendoza. Whilst Antonio Domínguez Ortiz blames the reluctance to fund the project on the stinginess of members of Seville's city council (who under Mendoza's proposal would make no contribution), others such as Francisco Santamaría have instead remarked that the *Consejo de Castilla* was reluctant to fund the project because of money given to Seville at the start of the century to improve their flood defences.[124] These improvements, in the first two decades of the century, will be outlined in the next chapter, but it is important to emphasise here how far the threat of flooding conditioned the spatial reality of the city; how it determined the city's organisation and how people lived in Seville.

It seems jarringly incongruous that Seville depended so vitally on the river – not only for its economic flourishing, but its very existence and configuration – yet its early modern government struggled in vain to overcome the logistical and infrastructural challenges the Guadalquivir posed. Such a struggle fits in with the wider context of the city's relationship with the environment more generally. Seville's wooden pontoon bridge, depending on urban metabolic processes for its continued use, makes clear the lack of a binary division between 'city' and

[124] Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla*, p. 63 and Santamaría, 'Las obras públicas', pp. 138-9.

'nature'. Urban politics was as much an exercise in environmental management as the process of inter-personal power relations.

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I have covered a wide variety of different subjects and issues in this chapter. What unites them is how they demonstrate the vital, central importance of environmental issues to Seville in the years 1621-1700. The challenges and jurisdictional divisions highlighted in previous chapters had a real impact on the daily, physical life of the city and its relationship with its environment. The seventeenth century for Seville was characterised by the deterioration of its physical infrastructure, victim to a lack of funding and additional strains being placed upon it. Long-running problems lacked long-term solutions, instead depending on antiquated political and legal structures and *ad hoc* measures for support. The city's *asistentes* led a city council that was increasingly preoccupied with environmental problems, knowing that they were accountable for the potential breakdown in urban metabolic processes. In earlier chapters I discussed the political expectations placed on *asistentes*, and the intellectual and cultural understanding of government that shaped them. I argue for political history and environmental history to be more closely integrated, particularly given that it has been argued that processes such as climate change had a wide-ranging influence on early modern history, in the seventeenth century in particular.[125] My final chapter connects the different threads traced in the ones that preceded it, examining in detail the flooding of the Guadalquivir River in the seventeenth century, and the political issues that surrounded those moments of acute crisis.

[125] Most thoroughly by Geoffrey Parker in his *Global Crisis*.

5. 'Un vivo retrato del Diluvio universal': flooding of the Guadalquivir River, the human response and political accountability in seventeenth-century Seville

When cities flood, the result is a temporary suspension of the 'urban'. The physical space is altered, perhaps unrecognisably, as water flows in surges down streets and through plazas, whilst the normal economic, social and political life of the city is forcibly put on hold. The metabolic processes that shape the city and help its residents survive fail – food, law and order become harder to secure in the short term, lives and livelihoods are taken away in the long term. When modern cities in developed states are hit by flood, national organisations, structures, and resources are mobilised in their relief, as well as local ones.[1] In the early modern world, however, cities could only rely on what was directly available during the crisis itself, and might wait months in the aftermath for aid from the rulers of the kingdom they belonged to. In the immediacy of the threat, in the thoroughness of the range of systems that the threat compromised, and in how the threat ruled out the possibility of external aid, flooding represented one of the most challenging, all-embracing crises for an early modern urban government to confront. My thesis so far has outlined the role of the *asistentes* within Seville, their relationship with both the city council (Seville's main governmental body) and the Spanish monarchy, and how the role required a direct engagement with environmental matters and issues to do with urban infrastructure. I have also made clear in Chapter 4 the extent to which the city was defined by the environment. This final chapter seeks to unite all these different threads, by looking at the history of the floods that hit Seville in the seventeenth century, and in particular how the political response was managed under the authority of the *asistente*.

[1] For example the British Army deployed soldiers in Yorkshire and Lancashire to help provide relief during the flooding in northern England in the winter of 2015: 'UK Floods: Extra soldiers sent to stricken areas', BBC News, accessed 15 November 2016, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35184999.

How a society manages the crises and disasters it suffers can offer valuable insights into the structures and processes that underpin it.[2] Greg Bankoff, in exploring the influence of 'natural' disasters on the culture and history of the Philippines, argued that 'cultures of disaster' might be created in places where disaster became 'normalised', an accepted and expected part of daily life.[3] In taking an interdisciplinary approach to disaster, Bankoff makes some simple but important points. Disasters occur within specific historical, political, and economic contexts. Human societies are not merely passive victims of disaster, but culturally construct disasters. Disasters themselves are 'agents of cultural formation' and not entirely distinct from other cultural phenomena, such as 'poverty, environmental degradation, demographic growth and inequitable socio-political structures'.[4]

The built and political structures to manage the urban environment and resources of Seville, described in the preceding chapters, established the manner in which a disaster would be experienced by the city. Floods of the Guadalquivir in seventeenth-century Seville can and should be read as political and social processes, as much as purely physical events. Whilst flooding in Seville was not frequent enough to be completely 'normalised', there were developed and highly culturally-contingent responses to the Guadalquivir's surges. These responses implicated the *asistentes* of Seville in a specific political role that required them to act as patriarchal guardian to the city, following monarchical models of behaviour. They were held accountable for failing to guard the city with sufficient vigour. Seville's city council and the *asistente* were also expected to repair the city's damaged infrastructure in the aftermath to flood, and indeed governing the city could depend on such repairs. Yet they were often impeded in this endeavour by the reluctance of Seville's religious communities to cooperate and contribute. These same religious institutions, however, were well positioned to take credit for the cessation of a crisis that was conceptualised as a punishment meted out by God. Seville's floods thus not only posed practical challenges for its political leaders to confront, they could also weaken the perceived efficaciousness of secular as

[2] In *The Plague Files*, Alexandra Parma and Noble David Cook have demonstrated the wealth of insight that might come from a sustained examination of a specific crisis, in this case the plague that hit Seville in 1581.
[3] Greg Bankoff, *Cultures of Disaster: Society and natural hazard in the Philippines* (London, 2003), p. 153.
[4] Ibid., p. 3, 17 and 153.

opposed to divine authority. Disasters and crises could intensify conflicts between different spheres of authority, at the same time as encouraging greater cooperation.

I begin this chapter by introducing flooding as a subject of historical inquiry for the early modern period – situating it within recent reappraisals of 'natural disasters' by those engaged in disaster studies – and contextualise it within Seville's history by describing the scope and extent of flooding 1621-1700 compared to other periods. The seventeenth century saw some of the most intense and damaging floods the city ever experienced, within a wider context of a challenging climate (that frequently provoked food shortages), national bankruptcy, plague, riot, and political instability at the centre (most especially during Charles II's reign from 1665). I then analyse in detail the 'Great Flood' of 1626, particularly focusing on the political response and the role of the *asistente*, and arguments between the secular and clerical authorities in the city in the aftermath. The flood of 1626 would remain the benchmark for judging the severity of Seville's floods until the modern era, and was referred to again throughout the seventeenth century. In this chapter I hope to reassert the significance of this flood and what it can teach us about politics and the environment in early modern Spain. My final subchapter focuses on the flood of early 1684, which swiftly followed prolonged drought at the end of the previous year. By 1684, flooding was being understood by contemporaries through the lens of Seville's wider 'decline' and was seen to have apocalyptic implications – for example in a text by the ecclesiastic Francisco de Godoy, with which I introduced this thesis. However, there were real continuities at the heart of Seville's urban culture, including the methods by which the city managed a crisis such as flood.

Throughout this chapter, nearly all of the themes and issues raised in previous chapters remain relevant – political structures, city-crown relations, the royal management of urban officials, jurisdictional conflict, the environmental aspects of urban government, the definition of the urban space in respect to the environment, and the management of urban infrastructure. Floods were dramatic and unforgettable events for those who experienced them, yet the benefits to historians of studying floods remain largely unexplored. This chapter hopes to suggest avenues of future research into early modern floods, and contribute to one of the central arguments of this

thesis: that governing an early modern city was a hands-on enterprise, requiring close engagement with environmental issues.

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i. Flooding in the early modern world and in seventeenth-century Seville

a) Flooding in the early modern world: disaster and punishment

There has been a recent upsurge in scholarship on flooding in the early modern world. Historians such as Christian Rohr, Raingard Esser and John Morgan have researched floods in the national contexts of Austria, the Low Countries and England respectively whilst for the Hispanic world research has tended to focus on Mexico, particularly the flooding of Mexico City.[5] Vera Candiani, for example, has written a richly detailed and revealing book on the construction of the Desagüe (a canal built to run excess water away from the city, and one of the most remarkable engineering projects ever undertaken in the Spanish Empire).[6] These recent studies and others suggest the limitations with which historical flooding used to be studied. They argue it was put into a category of its own and hardly approached as events touching on cultural, political and intellectual historical processes. Esser stresses the need to incorporate 'nature' into cultural history, pointing out that 'nature in history is a cultural construction'.[7] Candiani laments previous approaches to flooding more specifically, arguing 'because flooding is sent to an analytical corner, so to speak, by urban-centric, Whiggish scholarship, it tends to sit there, immobilized, for the

[5] Christian Rohr, 'Floods of the Upper Danube River and Its Tributaries and Their Impact on Urban Economies (c.1350-1600): The Examples of Towns of Krems/Steins and Wels (Austria)', *Environment and History*, 19 (2013), pp. 133-48, Raingard Esser, 'The Later Great Inundation: Tradition and Change in Early Modern Disaster Management', in Niall Ó Ciosáin (ed.), *Explaining Change in Cultural History* (Dublin, 2005), pp. 76-85, and John Morgan, 'Understanding Flooding in early modern England', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 50 (2015), pp. 37-50.

[6] Candiani, *Dreaming of Dry Land*. Also see Louisa Hoberman, 'Bureaucracy and Disaster: Mexico City and the Flood of 1629', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 6:2 (1974), pp. 211-30, for an article which, much like this thesis, explores early modern flooding as a political event. Hoberman argues that disasters are useful to study for their highlighting certain aspects not only of daily urban life, but also of the relationship of the municipality to the centre.

[7] Esser, 'The Later Great Inundation', p. 76.

whole period, becoming a "fact" that remains unaltered in its origins, causes, and implications'.[8] These new histories by such scholars have shaped my approach in this thesis. John Morgan's study of early modern English floods makes efficacious and stimulating use of contemporary printed flood accounts alongside other sources, for example, an approach I emulate in my analysis of the 1626 flood (see pp. 210-52).[9]

These recent works have also been sensitive to a wider reappraisal of the notion of 'disaster'. The term 'natural disaster' has come under scrutiny, for its suggesting that they are freak, chance, unfortunate events, rather than acknowledging the human factors – social, political, economic, cultural – that go into their happening.[10] My thesis appreciates the new, interdisciplinary aspect of disaster studies, and uses the term 'disaster' – rather than 'natural disaster'.[11] In doing so, it also places flood alongside more thoroughly studied disasters for Seville's history, such as plague.

My study of Seville's flooding in this chapter addresses two gaps in the current state of scholarship on flooding. Firstly, there is a lack of studies concerning flooding in early modern Spain, and the seventeenth century in particular. Given Spain's struggles throughout the century – characterised as 'decline' or as 'crisis' – it would be interesting to consider what role environmental events and disasters played in this process, adding meat to the bone (or not, as the case may be) of Parker's *Global Crisis* theory.[12] Secondly, there is also a comparative lack of studies that focus on urban flooding specifically in the early modern period. There is a paradox when it comes to cities and disasters: whilst cities are defined spaces, and (typically) partly-regulated and somewhat-ordered spaces – purportedly increasing the safety of residents – due to their population density and their physically compacted nature cities are actually more vulnerable

[8] Candiani, *Dreaming of Dry Land*, p. 6.
[9] Morgan, 'Understanding Flooding in early modern England', p. 38.
[10] For example, Anthony Oliver-Smith, 'Peru's Five Hundred Year Earthquake: Vulnerability in Historical Context', in Ann Varley (ed.), *Disasters, Development and Environment* (Chichester, 1994), pp. 31-2.
[11] I follow here the argument of Monica Juneja and Franz Mauelshagen, 'Disasters and Pre-Industrial Societies: Historiographical Trends and Comparative Perspectives', *The Medieval History Journal*, 10:1-2 (2007), p. 14-6.
[12] Parker, *Global Crisis*, pp. 254-90.

to catastrophe and disaster than other areas.[13] Cities and towns, furthermore, were the essential unit of local government for the early modern Spanish crown, and the king's main source of tax revenue.[14] Urban floods in early modern Spain, particularly for such a significant and heavily populated city as Seville, should be the subject of much more concerted study than they have been up to this point.

Before undertaking the case studies I have selected to begin addressing these historiographical lacunae, what general points about early modern flooding (and natural disaster more broadly) can be usefully established beforehand? Floods had a central place in the cosmographical framework of early modern western Europe. Noah's Flood, the universal deluge ('el diluvio universal' in Spain), was of particular importance to the (Christian) intellectual, cultural, and emotional tradition of early modern Europe. The Universal Flood of Noah was frequently used as an event from which the history of humanity might be told, the rebirth of human history amidst the world's destruction. Alonso Morgado, the sixteenth-century antiquarian and historian of Seville, introduced his *Historia* of the city by describing how 'Fue la Divina determinacion: que el mundo fuesse totalment destruydo por aguas de un general Diluvio', before Spain was populated by the descendants of the Patriarch Tubal, sent to the peninsula by his grandfather Noah following the Flood.[15] Tubal as the first settler of Iberia, a widely held theory in early modern Europe, put flooding at the core of Spanish identity.[16] The flood of Noah was vital regardless of one's confessional identity, however, and was not only the starting point for histories of Spain, but also of Britain, for example.[17] The Swiss naturalist Johann Jakob Scheuchzer, writing in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, went a step further, seeing Noah's flood as the key to explaining the history of the earth physically, as well as in terms

[13] Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud, 'Introduction: the Urban Catastrophe – Challenge to the social, economic, and cultural order of the city', in Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud, Harold L. Platt and Dieter Schott (eds.), *Cities and Catastrophes: Coping with Emergency in European History* (Frankfurt, 2002), p. 14.
[14] See pp. 108-9.
[15] Morgado, *Historia*, fo. 1v-2r.
[16] For example, Juan de Mariana's *The general history of Spain. From the first peopling of it by Tubal, till the death of King Ferdinand, who united the crowns of Castile and Aragon. With a contination to the death of King Philip III* (London, 1699). Written in Latin initially in 1592 and subsequently expanded and translated into Spanish then English, Mariana's history was one of the most popular printed histories of Spain.
[17] See J. Gerritsen, 'Aylett Sammes and the History of Ancient Britain', *Quaerendo*, 42:3-4 (2012), pp. 186-192.

of human events. He was presaged by Luther's commentaries on Genesis, which expressed the belief that Noah's flood was a vital moment in the continual process of decay that the earth was subject to.[18]

From such a conceptual starting point, it is unsurprising that floods were interpreted by both Protestants and Catholics across early modern Europe as acts of divine wrath, and therefore the consequence of human sin. Floods were seen as direct acts of God in response to human wickedness. In early modern Germany, floods and storms were referred to as 'Sündflut' (the flowing of sin).[19] Flooding in southwest England in 1607, meanwhile, was similarly interpreted as God's response to the nation's sin, divine judgement against the body politic, rather than just against the individual.[20] Spain was no different in this respect. In a printed account of the flooding of the river Tormes at Salamanca in 1626, the author (Álvaro Pérez, the marquis of Astorga), describes how no holy men perished in the various monasteries that were flooded, thanks to their piety. By contrast, a group of Portuguese students who were consorting with 'una muger de mala vida' on the night of the flood lost their lives.[21] Other disasters were met with the same response: fires and earthquakes, for example. Following such events, local clergy across Europe would preach on how these events were God's response to sin.[22] As we shall see, this theological interpretation was certainly applied to flooding in Seville 1621-1700.

In terms of physical defences and political structures, there was a great deal of variety across Europe, as different states and local contexts developed their own responses. In Venice, where flooding was an especially serious threat, an elaborate system of dikes required extensive resources to keep it functioning, but was maintained by a rich tradition of vernacular

[18] Michael Kempe, 'Noah's Flood: The Genesis Story and Natural Disasters in Early Modern Times', *Environment and History*, 9 (2003), pp. 152 and 156.
[19] Ibid., pp. 152-4.
[20] Morgan, 'Understanding Flooding in early modern England', p. 37.
[21] *Relacion del tragico sucesso que Salamanca llora, por la grande avenida del Rio Tormes, en veynte y seys de Enero de 1626 años* (Salamanca, 1626), fo. 1v-2r. This flood was part of the same flood event that caused the 'Great Flood' of 1626 in Seville (see below, pp. 201-2.)
[22] See Marie Luisa Allemeyer, 'Profane Hazard or Divine Judgement? Coping with Urban Fire in the 17th Century', *Historical Social Research*, 32:3 (2007), pp. 145-6, or Miguel Luis López-Guadalupe Muñoz and Jaime García Bernal, 'El temblor de 1680, entre tradición y pedagogía moderna', *Baetica. Estudios de Arte, Geografía e Historia*, 32 (2010), pp. 339-53.

engineering.[23] In France, along the unstable Rhône valley, regular floods would cause the landscape to change, revealing or submerging new 'islands' for settlement, which became the subject of contested legal claims.[24] In Mexico City, floods prompted the formulation of an ambitious engineering project to construct a huge overflow canal which, according to Vera Candiani, reflected the colonial concerns of its instigators, imposing their conceptualisation of order upon the landscape.[25] Despite the commonly held European attitude to flooding as divine punishment, there existed a number of ways by which the physical and political management of flooding was handled. It is these issues I will particularly focus on for Seville, connecting flooding to the political structures and priorities I described in previous chapters, and which connected city to court to king. Flooding, as I have argued, was not simply a 'natural' disaster but instead was formed partly by those structures and by the operation of politics in the city.

b) A chronology of flooding in seventeenth-century Seville

In 1878, the *sevillano* Francisco de Borja Palomo, then a history professor at Universidad de Sevilla, published his *Historia Crítica de las riadas o grandes avenidas del Guadalquivir*, a monumental study of flooding in Seville from its reconquest from the Moors in 1248 until his own time. In his dedication to the work, he prayed that his book would not be received idly, but instead would suggest the urgency of developing the infrastructure necessary to protect his city permanently from the risk of flood.[26] It would not be until the mid twentieth century that the city was finally able to undertake the works that safeguarded it against the Guadalquivir's violent surges, yet Palomo's book remains a tremendous resource for historians, as he catalogued all the floods mentioned in the historical record and listed the printed and archival sources available to study them. Systematic and thorough, Palomo catalogued floods chronologically, century by

[23] Karl Appuhn, *A Forest on the Sea: Environmental Expertise in Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore, 2009), pp. 254-5, and the same author's 'Friend of Flood? The Dilemmas of Water Management in Early Modern Venice', in Isenberg (ed.), *The Nature of Cities*, pp. 80-1. Appuhn describes how the local tradition came to be challenged by imported Dutch methods in the 1690s, in response to particularly serious flooding.
[24] Reynard, 'Explaining an Unstable Landscape', pp. 39-61.
[25] Candiani, *Dreaming of Dry Land*, p. 291.
[26] Palomo, *Historia Crítica*, pp. vi-vii.

century, and from his work a timeline of seventeenth-century flooding in Seville can be easily established. Palomo's work, however, comprehensive and sweeping though it is, did not set out to analyse what the political, social, or cultural implications of flooding were. His didactic concern to present clear and undeniable evidence of the endurance and severity of flooding as a threat to Seville determined his approach. When it came to explaining the contrast between the vigour and efforts of the city's inhabitants to help each other during a flood, and their seeming inability to construct long-term preventative solutions or deal with potential implications, Palomo turned to an apparently self-loathing stereotype of the lazy southern Spaniard and the work-shy Andalusian. Specifically referring to the aftermath of flooding in 1649, which may have contributed to the ease with which plague spread in the city later in the year, Palomo argued that after the 'heroismo' of the manner in which flood had been combated during the disaster itself,

> la apatía, la inercía, la dejadez congénitas con el carácter de los andaluces, da lugar á que se abandonen los que parecan firmísimos propósitos, y que sean relegados al olvido los proyectos salvadores que se concibieron en los momentos de angustia.[27]

To ascribe the failures of the narrow body of individuals comprising the city's civic and ecclesiastical authorities (the former headed, as we know, by a non-Andalusian) to a nebulous notion of regional character is an unhistorical leap. There is scope and need to reassess and reanalyse the significance and consequences of flooding in early modern Seville. Although this thesis only seeks to explore the political response and implications of flooding, avenues for possible future research will be made clear.

In seventeenth-century Seville, the years of flooding, following Palomo, were as follows:

[27] Palomo, *Historia Crítica*, p. 305.

Year	Dates of flooding
1603-4	18 December-4 January
1608	21 March
1618	10-2 March
1626	25 January-10 February
1627	3 January
1633	22 September
1642	18-23 January
1649	28 March-4 April
1683-4	23 December-21 February
1691	November
1692	January-February
1697	5-6 May

A number of quick observations can be made concerning the above dates. Although there are twelve recorded incidents of flooding in Seville in the seventeenth century, these are not evenly distributed throughout that time, but instead occurred in clusters. There are eight floods prior to 1650, but only four in the period 1650-1700: the city went thirty-two years without flooding in the years 1650-82. Of the last four floods, three occurred in the 1690s. This pattern can be explained by meteorological factors, specifically the decreasing levels of rainfall throughout Andalusia, rather than by improved flood defences, which as we will see remained largely static.[28] Floods happened most often in this century during the winter months, especially in January and February, though unsurprisingly none are observed in the summer months from June to August.

These floods also varied considerably in their seriousness and impact. A quick indicator of a flood's severity is the recorded dates of flooding. It is logical that those floods with a longer

[28] F.S. Rodrigo, M.J. Esteban-Parra, D. Pozo-Vázquez and Y. Castro-Díez, 'A 500-year precipitation record in southern Spain', *International Journal of Climatology*, 19 (1999), p. 1248.

timeline were more serious for the city, and indeed these floods have more available evidence, again suggesting severity. For the seventeenth century, the floods that lasted longer than a week were in 1603-4, 1626, 1649, and 1683-4. The work of historical meteorologists can help establish these observations within a wider and longer context and reinforce these tentative remarks. The historical meteorologists Mariano Barriendos and Fernando Rodrigo, studying five hundred years of flooding of Spanish rivers, established that from 1297 to the present day, over 55% of flooding in Seville happened December-March, and no floods at all occurred in summer, making it one of the most seasonably predictable rivers in Spain in terms of flooding.[29] The same research emphasises the wider context of the flood of 1626, part of a 'very large catastrophic event', in that it encompassed several river basins simultaneously, as flooding also struck Salamanca, Valladolid, Zamora, and Malaga. In the five hundred years of Spanish history surveyed for such geographically widespread events, there are only four others; and although one occurred in 1617, this was confined exclusively to Catalonia and the northeast.[30] Both this wider meteorological context and the voluminous textual response of Seville itself to the flood of 1626 suggest it as the subject of further study. The other flood that stands out in the table above is that of 1683-4. It came at the end of more than three decades without flooding and at a moment in Seville's history when disaster would have had a suggestive and powerful impact on the civic identity and memory of contemporaries. Flooding in Seville, then, was a frequent but irregular occurrence. It was seasonably predictable and always the result of heavy rainfall either in the city itself, or upriver. As we will see, the city authorities had a range of prepared, procedural responses to the onset of flood, which were understood by the city's main political agents, whilst in the wider city there was a range of embedded practical and cultural responses that persisted across the entirety of the period under study.

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[29] Mariano Barriendos and Fernando S. Rodrigo, 'Study of historical flood events on Spanish rivers using documentary data', *Hyrdological Sciences Journal*, 51:5 (2006), p. 772.
[30] Ibid., pp. 780-1.

ii. 'Otro a sido el Autor de tantos daños': the 'Great Flood' of 1626

Describing the night of Saturday 24-Sunday 25 January, 1626, the poet and historian Rodrigo de Caro (1573-1647) wrote in a letter to his friend Francisco de Quevedo, the playwright, poet and satirist (1580-1645), that 'no es posible decir lo que esta noche pasó en Sevilla'. All descriptions had to necessarily be short, as in the confusion of the night when the furious waters of the Guadalquivir broke into the city and flooded large areas, each looked only to their own safety, fleeing if they could or boarding themselves up in their houses, shouting for aid. In 'la oscuridad y tristeza de la noche', a muddled cacophony of the violent wind, the terrified screams of the stranded, and the ringing of the bells of the parish churches in warning and prayer created together 'un espantoso y confuso sonido, que parecia una prevencion del juicio final'.[31] Juan de Cetina, a lawyer of the *Real Audiencia*, agreed with Caro about the difficulties of describing the flood, when writing to a friend in Salamanca, a city also hit by flood in January 1626: 'Quien podra explicar señor la confusion de aquella noche [24-5 January], pues el reparo era impossible, y inevitable la ruyna[?]' The wind, Cetina described, was so strong that 'parecia traya toda el Mar consigo'.[32] The printed account of the flood written by Juan Beltrán de la Cueva, a resident who witnessed the flood, also emphasises the trauma of the evening of 24-5 January, as the frightful cries heard throughout the city, including the screams of women and children as they perished, 'estremecia el coraçon'.[33]

Floods were highly traumatic, impactful, and emotional events for cities to endure. As the accounts above suggest, popular memory might centre on specific moments, in this case the night in January 1626 when the city's flood defences were breached and Seville was engulfed by water. Yet throughout these crises, described as characterised by confusion and chaos, members of the city government worked to prevent or limit the damage, operating within the political structures

[31] Rodrigo Caro to Francisco Quevedo, 10 February 1626, quoted in Palomo, *Historia Crítica*, p. 240.
[32] *Copia de una carta que el Licenciado don Juan de Setina, Abogado de la Real Audiencia de Sevilla, escribiò a un amigo en esta Ciudad de Salamanca. Dasse quenta del estrago que hizo en aquella Ciudad y su comarca el Rio Guadalkivir, desde 18 de Enero hasta diez de Febrero de 1626 años*. (Salamanca, 1626), fo. 1r-v.
[33] Juan Beltrán de la Cueva, *Relacion verdadera, en que se da cuenta de todo el daño que causo las crecientes del rio Guadalquivir en la ciudad de Sevilla, y Triana, este año de 1626* (Lima, 1626), fo. 1v.

and the built infrastructure I previously described. Although these accounts all seem to suggest the power of an uncaring natural world over human fragility, the actions of urban politicians were scrutinised by the wider population during the aftermath of a flood. In this subchapter, I focus particularly on how the political response to the flood of 1626 was organised, on the attempts of *asistente* Fernando Ramírez Fariñas to lessen growing popular criticism, and on the political struggle to repair the damage caused by flood. I emphasise the vital importance of appreciating environmental considerations for urban governors, and explore further how the *asistente* was in a compromised political position between city and king – occasionally representing the former to the latter but also a target of ire when the populace was displeased with how the city was ruled.

a) 1626: The year of the flood

The 1626 flood was the most serious and damaging flood Seville suffered in the seventeenth century, and would come to be known as the 'Great Flood', the flood that others would be compared to and measured against, the name evocative of the flood of Noah. In his history of flooding in Seville, Palomo referred to this year as the one which 'registra sucesos más terribles de esta especie la historia de la capital de Andalucía'. Seville was not the only Spanish city to be hit by flood, and across Spain, 1626 came to be known as '*el año del diluvio*' (Palomo's italics).[34] In his multi-volume history of the city, published 1896-1903, Joaquín Guichot y Parody emphasised that this popular appellation was well-merited, as some two-thirds of the city was left under water, and it was feared that the land would never be usable again.[35] Valladolid and Salamanca were two of the other cities to be hit by flood in January 1626, as part of what has been called a 'very large catastrophic flood event' by Barriendos and Rodrigo, by virtue of the fact that several river basins across the Iberian Peninsula were flooded simultaneously due to high rainfall. They stress the potential impact of such occurrences, and argue that in 1626 people 'did not know any references for similar events in either written documents or the oral tradition',

[34] Palomo, *Historia Crítica*, p. 230.
[35] Joaquín Guichot y Parody, *Historia de la ciudad de Sevilla y pueblos importantes de su provincia: desde los tiempos más remotos hasta nuestros dias* (Seville, 1875-82), vol. 4, pp. 178-9.

perhaps explaining why some contemporaries expressed a disbelief that the events could be properly described at all.[36]

In 1626 Seville was still one of the most important cities in Europe, the centre of the Spanish Empire's trading network, heavily populated, and dependent on the river for its economic vitality. Both the wider and the local political context that year were dominated by the figure of the count-duke of Olivares, who was trying to enact his Union of Arms project (see p. 5). Still only five years into the reign of Philip IV, Olivares had hopes of being able to reform many of the Spanish monarchy's political and economic structures and processes.[37] The previous year had seen important gains in the monarchy's military conflicts – Spanish troops had captured Breda in June 1625, and that triumph for some contributed to 1625 being an *annus mirabilis* for Philip.[38] In Seville, the royal visit in 1624 had created a mood of popular euphoria around the spectacle, but had also raised political tensions as Olivares was dissatisfied with the government of the city (see pp. 91-4). The English attack on Cádiz in 1625 made the Spanish monarchy's military entanglements seem a more immediate threat to Seville, as the financial demands of war were increasing (conflict had resumed in Holland in 1621).[39] Fernando Ramírez Fariñas, a trusted ally of Olivares's, had been *asistente* since 1622. He conducted a thorough and critical *visita* on the work of the *Real Audiencia* and assisted Olivares in the sale of various towns from Seville's jurisdiction – a process that as we will see provoked discontent. The political context of 1626, then, both locally and nationally, might seem to have been in a state of tension between cautiousness and optimism. Both kingdom and city were at a crossroads.

Under these conditions, the city was unusually vulnerable to the impact of the climate and the natural world. Seville had already been hit by flooding earlier in the seventeenth century. In the winter of 1603-4, flood had followed on the heels of water scarcity and drought. But on 19 December 1603, sudden rains caused a flood which in its violence broke apart the Puente de Triana and surged in at the city gate near the port of El Arenal. Palomo emphasised that 'todas las

[36] Barriendos and Rodrigo, 'Study of historical flood events on Spanish rivers using documentary data', pp. 780-1.
[37] Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, pp. 324-30.
[38] Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares*, p. 226.
[39] Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla*, pp. 20-2.

memorias de aquel tiempo elogian el valor incomparable, la conducta heróica del Asistente Avellaneda'.[40] Bernardino Avellaneda worked at the Arenal gate to seal up the *husillos*, the drain mechanisms that regulated the flow of water into and out of the city, with apparent disregard for his own bodily safety. Even some twenty years after the event, his exemplary conduct was still being lauded: Andrés de Oviedo's *Memorial* following the 1626 flood (see pp. 233-6) praised him for responding to the flood 'con su persona y gran valor'.[41] Avellaneda in this way established a precedent for how *asistentes* were to respond to floods, a precedent that was recalled in 1626, as will be shown. This flood was followed by some recommendations for guarding the city more effectively against the river from an Italian engineer, Tiburcio Spannocchi (1541-1609), who had been a trusted engineer of Philip II and who recommended that the riverbed itself must be cleaned and kept smooth-flowing, that the city walls, particularly around El Arenal, had to be well-maintained, and that the *husillos* had to be kept in good condition, especially that near the Alameda, which as the lowest-lying area of the city was at risk from excess water most of all.[42] He also commented on the Guadalquivir's tributary flowing round the east of the city, the Tagarete, and suggested that since it often ran dry and stagnant it might have water from the Guadalquivir siphoned into it, thus lessening the volume of water flowing in the river's main channel.[43]

There followed another flood on 21 March 1608, which whilst not serious enough to be recorded in the *Annales* of Ortiz de Zúñiga, nevertheless caused extensive damage in Triana, ruining houses and causing further damage to both the Castillo and the Puente de Triana.[44] Another flood hit ten years later in 1618, again in early spring, which for a second time threatened Triana as well as the walled city. Just as in 1604, the *asistente* responded in 1618 with perceived

[40] Palomo, *Historia Crítica*, p. 215.
[41] Ibid., pp. 215-6.
[42] For Spannocchi's influence on Spanish scientific and engineering treatises in the early-seventeenth century see M.I. Vicente Maroto and M. Esteban Piñeiro, *Aspectos de la ciencia aplicada en la España del siglo de oro* (Toledo, 2006), p. 356. For Philip II's policy in respect to practical science, see David Goodman, 'Philip II's Patronage of Science and Engineering', *The British Journal for History of Science*, 16:1 (1983), pp. 49-66, though Goodman is curiously quiet on Spannocchi, despite his obvious significance.
[43] Spannocchi's recommendations were detailed in *Parecer que dio el comendador Tiburcio Spanoqui, cavallero del habito de san Juan a la ciudad de Sevilla, sobre los reparos que convienen para la inundacion del rio Guadalquivir* (Seville, 1604). For more on this document see Palomo, *Historia Crítica*, pp. 202-6 and Domínguez Ortiz, *Historia de Sevilla*, pp. 61-2.
[44] Palomo, *Historia Crítica*, p. 221.

heroism – Alonso de Bracamonte y Guzman, the count of Peñaranda, was praised in contemporary accounts for working promptly and assertively, without sleeping, to protect the city.[45] These early seventeenth-century disasters meant that flooding was a clearly established risk by 1626, and had gone a long way to establishing what the expectations for an *asistente* were when disaster struck.[46]

Firstly, I wish to establish the events of the 1626 flood, in terms of chronology and of the flood's spatial impact. It will be vital to retain a sense of time and space when I turn to consider the response to flood of Seville's political leadership and in particular of the *asistente*. In order to do so effectively however, I need to introduce the sources I have used in this analysis. As at other times throughout the thesis, I have consulted the *Annales* of Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga. Published over fifty years after the flood, Ortiz de Zúñiga was not born until 1636, but consulted the archives of the city council, which included papers on the events, and presumably spoke with those alive during the flood (though there is no direct evidence of this).[47] A thorough account of the flood is the *Enundación de Sevilla, por la creciente de su Rio Guadalquivir*. A flood account printed with licence from Luiz Ramírez, the *teniente* to *asistente* Fariñas, and probably written by someone close to the *asistente*'s office (the exact author or compiler is unknown), this narrative might be seen as an 'official version of events' (that is, as the city council and *asistente* wanted them to be understood), and was issued as a direct response to criticism of the *asistente* in the aftermath.[48] This account is useful for the wealth of detail it provides about the progress of the flood and the organisation of the political response, though due to its aims the latter should be seen as an 'ideal' rather than a reality. A number of private individuals wrote less guarded accounts. I introduced this subchapter by quoting from the account of Rodrigo Caro in his letter to Francisco Quevedo. Caro (1573-1647) was an antiquarian, historian, and poet, who had lived in

[45] Ibid., pp. 222-9.
[46] To a certain extent this had also been accomplished by sixteenth-century floods, though none of these were as serious. Palomo, *Historia crítica*, pp. 41-56.
[47] Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales*.
[48] *Enundacion de Sevilla, por la creciente de su Rio Guadalquivir: prevenciones antes del daño y remedios por su reparo* (Seville, 1626). I analyse this account in further detail below, pp. 228-30. Also see Palomo, *Historia Crítica*, p. 249.

Seville since 1594 and wrote on the city's antiquities and its folkloric practices.[49] His account is vivid and dramatic, befitting a man of such erudition, but also provides specific detail on which neighbourhoods were flooded and when. Juan de Cetina, a lawyer of the *Real Audiencia*, also wrote a letter describing the flood to a friend – this friend was in Salamanca, one of the other cities hit by flood in this year. His letter describes the role of the *regente* of the *Real Audiencia* and other noblemen, and lessens the role of the *asistente*, perhaps serving as something of a corrective to the account of the *Enundacion*. He also provides clear evidence of the interpretation of flooding as divine punishment.[50]

There are three further flood accounts that should be mentioned here. The *Relacion verdadera en que se da quenta de todo el daño que causò las crecientes del rio Guadalquiuir en Seuilla, y Triana*, written by one Beltrán de la Cueva – simply introduced as a 'natural' of Seville – is a briefer account, but demonstrates a clear concern to outline the impact of the flood on the city's monastic communities in particular.[51] A recently discovered account is *La avenida de Sevilla en 25 de Enero de 1626 Domingo día de la Conversión de San Pablo*, a text from the Biblioteca de Ajuda in Portugal, anonymous, unedited and unprinted, but interesting in its comments on the criticism of *asistente* Fariñas and for giving a sense of panic in the city, describing how 'Pone horror lo que de día y de noche se está viendo y oyendo.'[52] There is also an account as part of the manuscript *Memorias eclesiásticas y seculares* in the Biblioteca Colombina. This manuscript was compiled by Diego Ignacio de Góngora (1628-1710, a *familiar* of Seville's

[49] On Caro see Luis María Gómez Canseco, *Rodrigo Caro: un humanista en la Sevilla del seiscientos* (Seville, 1986). The letter, dated 10 February 1626, is reproduced in Palomo, *Historia Crítica*, pp. 236-48.
[50] *Copia de una carta que el Licenciado don Juan de Setina, Abogado en la Real Audiencia de Sevilla, escribiò à un amigo en esta Ciudad de Salamanca. Dasse quenta del estrago que hizo en aquella Ciudad y su comarca el Rio Guadalkivir, desde 18 de Enero hasta diez de Febrero de 1626 años* (Salamanca, 1626).
[51] Juan Beltrán de la Cueva, *Relacion verdadera, en que se da quenta de todo el daño que causò las crecientes del rio Guadalquiuir en Seuilla, y Triana, este Año de 1626* (Lima, 1626). The Lima-based printer of this tract, Geronimo de Contreras, had initially operated out of Seville from 1618, until relocating to Lima in 1620 following the death of that city's only printer. His origins in Seville may explain his interest in printing the tract, although news of disaster and major disruption in the principal port for New World trade in Europe was very relevant information for the cities of Spain's American territories. See José Toribio Medina, *La Imprenta en Lima (1584-1824)* (Santiago de Chile, 1904-7), pp. xli-xliii. The account was reprinted in Seville as the *Segunda relacion verdadera...* (Seville, 1626).
[52] *La avenida de Sevilla en 25 de Enero de 1626 Domingo día de la Conversión de San Pablo*, reprinted in Francisco Zamora Rodríguez, '"Quando el agua llegare aquí Sevilla..." La avenida del río Guadalquivir en 1626 según un documento de la Biblioteca de Ajuda (Portugal)', *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos*, 41 (2014), pp. 407-31. Rodríguez offers the document primarily as a source to help historians of 'micro history'.

inquisitorial tribunal and an official of the *Casa de Contratación*) in the late 1690s, and together forms a narrative from 1619-98.[53] The author for the section dealing with 1626 is unknown, but provides a wealth of detail on the criticism of the *asistente*, including reproducing a number of satirical sonnets disseminated against him, and appears to have been written by someone with a good knowledge of the city council and the governing of the city. The account survives as part of a compilation of flood accounts from across Seville's seventeenth century, and given that the author of the entry for the 1642 flood makes a point of stressing personal memories and experiences, an emphasis lacking for that of 1626, there is a chance that the author may not have been an eyewitness in 1626.[54] Finally, I have made brief use of Sección X of the AMS – the minutes of the city council's sessions. Given that, as shall be seen, regular meetings were suspended during the crisis itself, this source is as useful as much for what it does not include as for what it does, and also provides useful detail on the preparations.

Using these sources, it is possible to ascertain the chronology of Seville's 'Great Flood' of 1626 with a good degree of certainty. There is a broad consensus about the general progress of the flood. It was the result of heavy rainfall both in and around the city and, crucially, further upriver. The sources focus on the meteorological conditions in Seville itself, describing how rain started to fall on Saturday 17 January, although some give Sunday 18 or Monday 19 as the date when it began to rain heavily. Two accounts mention that on Tuesday 20 the city received news of flooding in Cordoba, some one hundred and thirty kilometres upriver.[55] The city council began to take preventative measures to guard against flood on that day, as I will describe below. Wednesday 21 may have seen a drop in the intensity of the rain, with one account describing it as 'claro, y sin agua', yet rain picked up again on Thursday, and by Friday the water levels of the Guadalquivir had begun to reach the city walls, some fifty metres from the normal channel of the river.[56] All the accounts are in agreement about when the city was put into crisis. During Saturday

[53] 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir en Sevilla', *Memorias eclesiásticas y seculares de la muy noble y muy leal ciudad de Sevilla* (1698), BCC 59-1-03, fo. 259r-263r.
[54] Ibid., fo. 264v.
[55] *Relacion verdadera*, fo. 1r and *Copia de una carta*, fo. 1r.
[56] *Relacion verdadera*, fo. 1r. The *Enundacion*, fo. 1r, describes how water had already reached the gates by the Thursday.

25 rain continued to fall unrelentingly and water levels kept rising. It was not until the middle of the night, however, that the city's flood defences – the gates and their *husillos* – were finally breached by a crushing surge of water. Most of the accounts describe that it was near the stroke of midnight when walled Seville was penetrated by the flood, plunging residents into a state of acute panic and danger, continuing through the early hours of Sunday 25 and the rest of that day.[57]

From this point, the city was fighting against floods for a period of about twenty days, until at least Thursday 12 February. Within that time, there were two further recurrences of severe flooding in the walled city prompted by more rainfall. Following a moment of respite after the initial disaster, in which time the water levels started to decrease (Wednesday 28 to Thursday 29), there was another burst of water into the city on Wednesday 4 February, at around five in the morning.[58] This same pattern repeated itself once more – a brief cessation of violent weather was followed by one more barrage of wind and rain and another flood that easily breached the city walls from Tuesday 10 to Thursday 12 February.[59] Although from this date there were no more floods and the weather calmed, the city remained pooled with water for two more weeks; Ortiz de Zúñiga claims that it was not until 26 February that the city was able to fully drain the excess water from its streets.[60] The 1626 flood then might more accurately be described as three separate floods – the shock and disaster of the tragic night of 24-5 January, followed by less serious repeats on 4 and 10 February. There was a full week of adverse weather in the build-up to the initial flood, and, because of the prolonged rain, water remained in the city for a few weeks after the final inundation. Seville was in a state of flood management for an entire month.

No area of the city remained unaffected by the 1626 flood. But it is important to establish which areas were affected at what times, including the extramural neighbourhoods and communities. The walled city is where I will begin, however, as the largest and most complicated space, home to the vast bulk of Seville's population as well as the headquarters for its political

[57] Caro to Quevedo, in Palomo, *Historia Crítica*, p. 240, *Copia de una carta*, fo. 1v, *Enundacion*, fo. 1v, *La avenida de Sevilla,* p. 421, 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', fo. 260r-v and *Relacion verdadera*, fo. 1r.
[58] *Enundacion*, fo. 3v and *Relacion verdadera*, fo. 2r.
[59] *Enundacion*, fo. 3v-4v and *Relacion verdadera,* fo. 2v. The letters sent by Rodrigo Caro and Juan de Setina are both dated 10 February, both men perhaps optimistically pre-empting the end of the flooding.
[60] Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales*, p. 646.

and religious authorities. The walls, the city gates, and their drainage mechanisms could be sealed when flood threatened, as I describe below in analysing the political response, and in that way, protect the city to a certain extent from floodwater. Yet if enough pressure amassed, these defences would be breached and water would surge into the city, as happened on the night of 24-5 January 1626. All the accounts are in agreement that from around midnight, the defences at both the Puerta Nueva, in the northwest part of the city walls (known by the time of the street-plan of Olavide as the Puerta de la Barqueta), and the Puerta del Arenal at the port, were breached by an onrush of water.[61] Both gates were obvious spots for the water to have most force – the Puerta Nueva was at the corner of the city walls (see Figures 15 and 16) which first greeted the river on its course past the main (walled) city, whilst the situation of the Puerta del Arenal meant that it received the bulk of the water which flowed round the bend in the river, surging onwards into the inviting stretch of flattened land which usually gave space for ships to unload their cargo. The sources are clear on the effect of these gates being breached simultaneously.

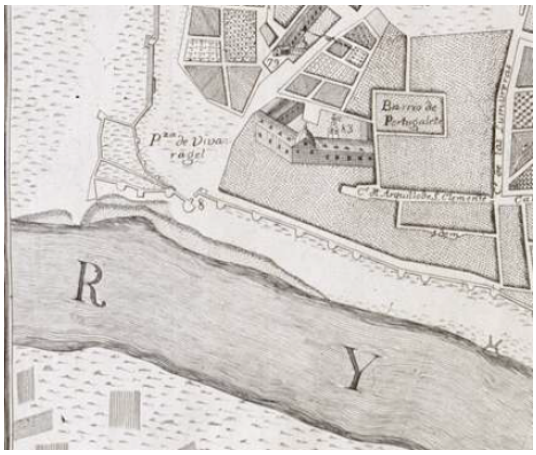


Figure 15: Puerta Nueva. Close-up of *Plano topográphico* (1771).

[61] *Enundacion*, fo. 1v, *Relacion verdadera*, fo. 1v-2r, and Caro to Quevedo, pp. 238-9.

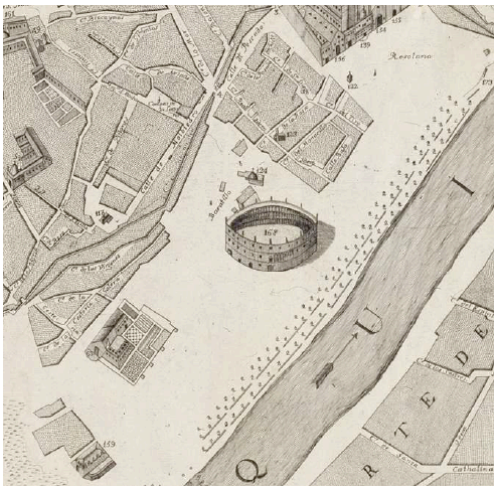


Figure 16: Puerta del Arenal. Close-up of *Plano topográphico* (1771).

The *Enundacion de Sevilla* describes how the water flowed down the streets of the city from both gates, the floodwater from both converging so that they formed a line across walled Seville, instantly severing communications and flooding fifteen parishes at once.[62] The *Relacion* of Juan Beltrán de la Cueva explains further why these gates being breached had such an impact: since the Puerta Nueva was at one of the higher-lying points of the city, the water from the Guadalquivir was able to flow downhill, meet the water pouring in at Puerta del Arenal and quickly flood the entire city 'desde la puerta de Xerez [near the Real Alcázar], hasta la [puerta] nueva'.[63] Low-lying areas were quickly transformed, Góngora's manuscript reporting that 'la Alameda parecia un mar'.[64] As part of this process, key civic spaces such as the Plaza de San Francisco (where the buildings of both the city council and the *Real Audiencia* were located) were flooded.[65] Within this, there were areas of comparative relief – Plaza San Salvador, for example, was at a higher level to surrounding areas and was used as a place of refuge.[66]

The flooding of the tributary streams – *arroyos* – of the Guadalquivir around Seville resulted in more areas being flooded in different areas of the city. Juan de Cetina makes clear in his letter that the *arroyos* were flowing as quickly and as violently as the main river itself – 'tal

[62] *Enundacion*, fo. 2r.
[63] *Relacion verdadera*, fo. 1v-2r.
[64] 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', fo. 260v.
[65] *Enundacion*, fo. 2r.
[66] Ibid., fo. 2v.

era la copia de agua que trayan Aritaña, Tagarete, y Guadaira'.[67] As Rodrigo Caro describes, because of the attention placed on preparing the defences along the stretch of wall running parallel to the main channel of the river on the western side of the city, the east of the city in particular was poorly prepared for the violence of the Tagarete. Caro describes how water from this tributary 'corrió furiosamente' and entered the city through the drains and gates in the east, including the Puerta del Sol in the northeast corner of the city, and flooded the parishes of San Julia, Santa Lucía and the calle del Sol.[68] The overflowing of the Tagarete resulted in the total flooding of the extramural areas and parishes just outside the city walls to the east side – the Prado de Santa Justa, the parish of San Roque and the monastic convent of San Agustin all specifically mentioned by Caro.[69] In order to appreciate the scale of the *asistente*'s task in organising a political response to this disaster, it is important to remember that it was not just water from the main channel of the river that threatened the city. On the west side of the city, and indeed on the other, western bank of the Guadalquivir itself, the district of Triana was devastatingly hit by the flood of 1626. The flooding of 24-5 January cut this neighbourhood off entirely from the rest of the city, and plunged its residents into a desperate fight for survival, as most sought shelter in the tallest building on that side of the river – the church of Santa Ana.[70] Due to the lack of walls protecting its buildings, the district was especially vulnerable to the destructive impact of flood. The flood of 1626 reconfigured the spatial realities of Seville. The most evocative description of this process was provided by Juan Beltrán de la Cueva:

> Ha quedado el rio por lo ancho de la ciudad, desde los caños de Carmona, hasta el pie de la cuesta de Castilleja, hecho un mar, donde Sevilla es una isla, y Triana otra, S. Bernardo, que es un arrabal, otra, la Cartuxa otra, y todo al fin en medio el agua.[71]

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[67] *Copia de una carta*, fo. 1r. The Tagarete, as I described in Chapter 4, was a tributary of the Guadalquivir that ran around the city walls to the east. The Guadaira, meanwhile, was another river from the same source as the Guadalquivir that ran into the latter, larger river just south of the city from the east. The Aritaña, known today as the Tamarguillo, was a smaller tributary that also ran from the east and joined the main river between the Tagarete and Guadaira. These can be seen on Olavide's street plan, Appendix 2.
[68] Caro to Quevedo, p. 240.
[69] Ibid., p. 241.
[70] *Enundacion*, fo. 3r.
[71] *Relacion verdadera*, fo. 2v. Castilleja was to the west of the city, beyond the Vega de Triana. Cartuja was to the north of Triana, so named for the Carthusian monastery it was home to. San Bernardo, finally, was just to the southeast of the city walls, near the royal palace. See Figure 8, p. 147, for a view over the Vega.

The change in the landscape was an utter cessation of normal urban conditions. The challenges to Seville's government were direct, intense, and total.

Before describing the flood management strategies, I wish to reiterate the scale and nature of these challenges. One of the most profound ways in which a flood had an impact was in breaking down the means and networks of communication, both within the city and with the world outside. All of the accounts focus on the complete confusion of the night of 24-5 January, and how it was impossible to know even what was going on a few streets away due to the water, the darkness, and the noise. Caro provided a vivid description of the cacophony – the crushing water, cries of the afflicted and the ringing of parish bells creating a fearsome noise.[72] Although criers hurried through the streets shouting warnings once the flood defences had been breached, their efforts were mostly in vain, and because people were asleep they woke up confused and terrified, finding 'un mar de agua' outside their homes.[73] Beltrán de la Cueva, however, does describe that one thing could be heard 'con claridad' – 'las vozes de las mugeres, y niños que perecian'.[74] 'Fué terrible la confusion que amaneció el dia de la Conversion de San Pablo, que fué el domingo, veinte y cinco deste mes', wrote Caro to Quevedo; by the morning, the water had cut families off from one another – parents searched for children, women for their husbands.[75] The landscape in which these panicked searches took place was strange and hostile. Newly submerged, the streets of the city could now only be traversed using boats, which were desperately requisitioned from all sources for emergency use (see p. 218). There were some who knew how to swim; others had recourse only to their piety to save them if they woke up with their houses already flooded.[76] Normal expectations were subverted – cats and mice were seen huddled together, shivering, on roof-tops.[77] In such conditions the dangers were many – quite aside from the direct physical threat of the water, a food shortage was almost guaranteed, the infrastructure providing drinking water was compromised by dirty flood water, and crime could flourish with

[72] Caro to Quevedo, p. 240.
[73] *Enundacion*, fo. 1v.
[74] *Relacion verdadera*, fo. 1v.
[75] Caro to Quevedo, p. 243.
[76] *Enundacion*, fo. 1v. This account describes how on the night of 24-5 January, around the Calle de Harinas near El Arenal, water entered dwellings so that 'nadavan las camas dentro en las casas'.
[77] Caro to Quevedo, p. 244.

municipal manpower devoted entirely to combating the immediate crisis. Affecting the whole city, both inside and outside the walls, and spread out over a period of several weeks, the 1626 flood was as rigorous a test as Seville's government faced in the entire seventeenth century.

b) Coordinating the political response to disaster

How did the city council respond to the threat and the event of a flood? What processes and structures were enacted, and what spatial and physical structures did they operate within? Did jurisdictional conflict with other political institutions in the city continue during the disaster? Finally, what was the role of political leaders and figureheads, most especially the *asistente*, in a contested political space between the urban and royal?

The ordinary processes or urban government, as with other normal urban processes, were disrupted and suspended by flood. This reality is most readily apparent in the minute-books of the city council. In January 1626, the regular meetings of the city council (held on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays) were maintained up until the weekend of 24 January, yet following and during the full onset of the crisis they were formally cancelled. A brief summary of the meetings held 19-23 January establishes the extent to which the risk of flooding was formally discussed in council sessions before the flood's arrival. The earliest date given for the onset of rain by the different flood accounts is 17 January, and the first regular council meeting after this date was Monday 19 January – the date when most of the flood accounts concur that the rain started to fall heavily. At this meeting, there is no mention of any threat to the city from the river, the main items of business being work required on the stone basin in the Plaza of San Francisco (expressed in a petition submitted by the *maestro mayor*, Andrés de Oviedo) and concern over the high price of meat in the city.[78] Rain, even heavy rain, was unexceptional at that time of year in Seville, and there was as yet no concern that it might turn into something more serious. The threat of flooding may well have been informally discussed even if it was not directly addressed and recorded in the minutes, however. On Wednesday 21 January, the next regular meeting of the council, it was

[78] Meeting of 19 January 1626, AMS X, H/1637, lib. 37, 1a Escribanía.

acknowledged that the city was under threat from 'corrientes'. There is no direct mention of the fact that on Tuesday 20 news had reached the city that there was flooding in Cordoba – a fact recorded by a few of the flood accounts used above, and a good indicator that Seville was at risk. At this meeting the *asistente* created a flood 'commission', authorised to make use of municipal funds as it needed them. Members of this commission included the *asistente*, his *tenientes*, the *veinticuatros*, and officials from the *Real Audiencia*. Referring back to a meeting of 9 January, less than two weeks previously, the meeting authorised the repair works that Andrés de Oviedo had recommended at the Puerta de Jerez and the Puerta de Carbon, both at the southern edge of the city near the river, not far from the cathedral and Real Alcázar.[79] The increasing rain gave extra impetus and urgency to this project.

However, far from consuming all their energy and focus, the threat of flood was still only one urgent need among others – the issue of supplying the city with sufficient livestock for meat remained as much of a priority. Two days later, on Friday 23 January, this picture had changed and the agenda for that day's council meeting was entirely concerned with the imminent threat of flood. The entry in the minute book is much shorter than was typical, detailing how eighty *ducados* were to be released from the municipal funds to pay for more urgent repairs at the *husillos* (see pp. 203 and 214-5) and that money was to be put aside for the 'sucorro de la gente que tubiere necesidad'.[80] More specific instructions for individual councilmen during flood were not discussed in this meeting, as they were assigned by the special flood commission that had been created two days before, the composition of which can be ascertained from other sources. Flood struck in earnest on the weekend of 24-5 January, when no regular meetings were held, and the crisis was too immediate to allow for an emergency meeting. The entry for the next regular session on Monday 26 is brief and to the point, demonstrating how the regular procedures of urban government were discarded in a natural disaster (and how its associated records thus become less informative):

[79] Meeting of 21 January 1626, ibid.
[80] Meeting of 23 January 1626, ibid.

> Cabildo de lunes veynte seis dias del mes de henero de mill y seiscientos y veynte seis años en este cabildo se juntaron el senor doctor don Luis Ramires de Arellano teniente mayor de asistente desta ciudad y los señores no ha cabildo este dia ni haga cabildo siguiente por la abenida deste Rio.[81]

Flooding, as a result of the crisis it produced, created a lacuna in the records of the city council, a gap in bureaucratic time that has to be reconstructed from other evidence. The next time the council met, it was for an extraordinary meeting convening on Thursday 5 February, ten days later. This gap demonstrates that the flood placed a halt on the normal day-to-day running of the city by its municipal government. Describing the political response of a city to flood requires the use of non-governmental sources in tandem with more official records, although the line between the two could be blurred. I will first reiterate and explain further the physical structures that this political response engaged with, and the spaces it operated within, as a necessary context for an appreciation of the role of specific individuals.

The main physical defence for the city against flooding, as has been established, was the city walls themselves. Although better maintained in some stretches than in others, the walls by and large presented a solid obstacle in the face of flood water. The points of greatest vulnerability were the city gates, fifteen wooden gaps in the stone cordon that allowed for the flow of traffic into and out of Seville. Built into these gates were drainage mechanisms known as *husillos*, essentially pipes just below the surface of the wall and gate which, under normal conditions, ran water from the city's drains and gutters to outside the perimeter of the walls. Fernández Chaves explains that the *husillos* were 'el único sistema de expulsión de aguas pluviales y superficiales' that the city possessed, Seville's being so low-lying (only eight metres above sea-level) as to make such a system necessary.[82] Not all of these *husillos* were at the gates – there were twenty-one *husillos*, and some simply ran out of the city at the base of a section of wall. The city's drainage system was in many ways insufficient. Most streets lacked any drain or guttering, as the drains existed only to get rid of excess rainwater – which settled in specific areas – rather than provide somewhere to remove dirty or unhygienic water (they were thus not especially well-

[81] Meeting of 26 January 1626, ibid.
[82] Manuel Fernández Chaves, 'Hábitos de naturaleza y costumbres de la "Ninfa *Indolencia*" en Sevilla: río y husillos', in Francisco Núñez Roldán (ed.), *Ocio y vida cotidiana en el mundo hispánico en la edad moderna* (Seville, 2007), pp. 755-6.

maintained during times of low rainfall). The drains and gutters (some subterranean) which did exist flowed to the *husillos* down the city's streets, the *husillos* themselves being situated irregularly and in many cases not running into the river or an *arroyo*.[83]

In a flood these *husillos* facilitated the entry of fluvial water into the city – water could flow into the drains just as easily as out. Consequently, a system had to be in place to allow for the closing of the *husillos* in a flood. To this effect, each *husillo* had a grooved slot into which a wooden board could be inserted, vertically downwards, and the top of the slot would then be caulked.[84] The city council was obliged to arrange for the supervision of the *husillos*, most especially so that they would be promptly sealed in flood, a time-worn obligation reiterated in the city's *Ordenanzas* compiled in 1500:

> Custumbre immemorial, siempre usada, y guardada, es en Seuilla, que el Cabildo de la dicha ciudad acostumbrada poner una buena persona, de buena vida y fama, en la tenencia de los husillos, por do sale el agua fuera de la ciudad al rio, quando crecen las lluuias de aguas, y el rio crece: y para cerrar los dichos husillos quando el rio sale, en tanto alto que ellos deuen estar cerrados, y por la costa, trabajo, y guarda que en ello ha de poner, se le dà cierta pension de dineros en cada un año.[85]

The city council thus employed an official – a *tenedor* – to manage the *husillos*, arguably insufficient support for a system of over twenty such devices, who had to close and seal the *husillos* when necessary as the river increased. In flood his work would be supported by other members of the city council. This entry in the *Ordenanzas* also indicates that managing the *husillos* could be a delicate and dangerous balancing act. Whilst it was important that when heavy rainwater was falling in the city, its exit from the city be facilitated; but the *tenedor* also had to be aware that if the amount of water in the river increased too much the *husillos* had to be sealed. If they were sealed, the rainwater in the city would then pool around the city gates and *husillos*, its exit barred. The decision to seal would therefore be taken at the last minute, when it was evident there was no other choice, as it had costs and consequences for the city, without even considering the logistical enterprise, requiring the involvement of labourers and craftspeople.

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[83] Ibid., p. 756.
[84] Ibid., p. 760.
[85] *Ordenanzas de Sevilla*, fo. 54v.

In the flood of 1626, it appears that the decision to start sealing the *husillos* was taken on Tuesday 20 January, going unrecorded in the minutes of the city council, the choice being made on a day when there was no regular session. The *Enundacion de Sevilla* reports that on this day the city council took 'las prevenciones ordinarias' to prepare for flood, and the letter of Juan de Cetina elaborates that, following the news of flooding in Cordoba, the blocking and caulking of the *husillos* was performed.[86] The *Enundacion* goes into more detail on what exactly the ordinary steps were in this procedure, and helps shine more light on how the response was organised politically. Describing that the gates and *husillos* of the city were to be shut and sealed respectively, and that the drains near the city gate boarded up, the account explains how this work was done 'a la satisfacion de carpinteros, calafates, y del Maestro mayor desta ciudad, que por sobrestante, de ordinario asistia con los diputados de cada puerta' – the *tenedor* of the *husillos* was thus subordinate to these experts in a crisis, again suggesting they were not technically trained.[87] The reliance of the city on such craftspeople and experts, particularly on the *maestro mayor*, is especially clear in this instance, whilst the gate deputies (comprising the city's *veinticuatros* as part of the flood commission – again, non-experts) could do little more than make sure the work was being done quickly enough. The gates were normally under the overall supervision and authority of the *alguazil mayor*, the city's chief official for maintaining law and order on the streets (p. 33). It was they who possessed the keys, and under normal conditions would perform nightly inspections of all the gates, which were then closed.[88] In Chapter 4 I established the significance to the city of its walls, as a marker and symbol. Morgado in the sixteenth century argued that the gates in particular gave Seville glory, through the great variety of people from around the world that passed through them each day. He argued that the responsibility of the *alguazil mayor* to guard the keys to the gates was a particular 'preeminencia'.[89] When a flood threatened the city gates, it not only put the city's residents in physical danger, it arguably was striking at a central component of the city's identity. It turned

[86] *Enundacion*, fo. 1r and *Copia de una carta*, fo. 1r.
[87] *Enundacion*, fo. 1r.
[88] *Ordenanzas de Sevilla*, fo. 13r and Morgado, *Historia*, fo. 41r.
[89] Morgado, *Historia*, fo. 41r.

these vitally important structures and urban spaces into chaotic battlefields, where the mutual relationship between city and nature would be reconfigured. It also challenged the hierarchical superiority of the political elite above experts and technicians – the latter took the central role in helping the city endure flood.

The efforts of the city council were thus focused on the gates as the most likely points where water could enter. As part of the emergency flood commission, the *asistente* numbered gate deputies (*diputados*) – one per gate – to monitor conditions, naming them from the group of *veinticuatro* councilmen, with members of the *cabildo de jurados* in support.[90] Their main task was to oversee the work of the craftspeople described above, and ensure that the necessary tools and materials were at hand – axes, wood, and even reserves of coin to purchase new resources or implements as needed. Given how the response was structured, a good deal of emphasis was placed on the personal efforts of the city's civic elite. During a flood, they were required to be active and visible defenders of the city, their work performed according to the dictates of the city's built environment and the demands of the natural world. This expectation was partly a consequence of the example set by the *asistentes* in 1604 and 1618 described above (pp. 203-4). The spatial organisation of the political response was determined by the *asistentes*, who had to map the institutions of urban government onto Seville's physical reality. In this process, they had to engage with the infrastructure, and depend on the cooperation and the advice of both the city's experts and craftspeople, and its councilmen, who knew local conditions more intimately.

The city gates were the first line of defence, and initially where Seville's city government directed all of their efforts. But on 24-5 January several key gates were overwhelmed, and the city leadership had to handle the chaos prompted by a complete alteration of the urban landscape. The normal means of transportation and communication were severed, and so one of the first priorities following the entry of water into the city was to facilitate movement. This meant the use of boats and ships by the city council – to rescue those stranded in their houses and take them to a safer location, to deliver food and crucial supplies where they were needed, and to be able to reach spaces and structures where repair works were needed or where there was work to be done to

[90] Palomo, *Historia crítica*, p. 253 and *Enundacion*, fo. 1v.

prevent the entry of more water into the city. Caro's letter to Quevedo indicates that without boats, travel in the flooded neighbourhoods was impossible – people could not leave their homes 'sinó en barco'.[91] The Guadalquivir was crossed every day by large numbers of small boats, as an alternative to crossing the city on foot at the Puente de Triana (unfortunately there is no record of precise numbers, but it seems likely that most residents did not have their own boats, so numbers using the bridge would have been high), and there would also have been vessels small enough to navigate the city streets in private ownership, or attached to the larger ships that had been unloading at the port of El Arenal. It is clear from the flood accounts that there were not enough boats to cater for adequate communications and travel in the city. The *Enundacion de Sevilla* reported that 'faltavan los barcos en la ciudad para el manejo de las calles'.[92] The city council tried to secure more boats that they could use and the *asistente* exerted his executive authority in this respect, although he delegated the task to his *teniente*, Doctor Roano Corrionero. Corrionero emerges as a key figure in the management of the flood in 1626; little is known about him, although it seems that after his post in Seville he became a lawyer at the royal court of appeal in the Canary Islands.[93] Fariñas installed Corrionero into the emergency post of *alcalde de barcos* (officer of boats), given the power to rent boats on behalf of the city council and get them into the streets to help with the crisis. These came at a financial cost, perhaps as much as a thousand *reales* a day for each boat, but the *Enundacion* explains that in this way, 'mediante cuyo diligencia [of Corrionero] entraron aquel dia [25 January] mas de ciento [barcos]'.[94] The first priority once these boats were under the control of the urban government was to rescue those stranded and at risk of drowning or having their houses collapse around them. Juan Beltrán de la Cueva describes how boats went from window to window in the worst-affected areas of the city, and people exited their houses from the windows to be saved.[95]

[91] Caro to Quevedo, p. 240.
[92] *Enundacion*, fo. 2r.
[93] Gerónimo Gascón de Torquemada, *Gaçeta y nuevas de la Corte de España desde el año 1600 en adelante* (Madrid, 1991), p. 289.
[94] *Enundacion*, fo. 2r.
[95] *Relacion verdadera*, fo. 1v-2r.

It is evident, however, that despite the *asistente*'s attempts to have all boats put into municipal service, a number of boats remained in private use, and that there were a number of unscrupulous, enterprising persons exploiting the situation to their own advantage. Juan de Cetina wrote to his friend that some boatmen were charging families one hundred *reales* to be rescued. One even attempted to charge three hundred *reales* for access to his boat, but in a case of speedy divine judgement was killed on the spot by a piece of falling masonry.[96] Flooding, by disturbing the normal means of communication and travel, could make a cruel economy out of life and death, and the civic authorities led by the *asistente* struggled not only to find enough boats to adjust to these conditions, but also to maintain law and order in the face of such disruption. Given how vital boats were for the city during a flood, and given that flooding was such a well-established threat, it is perhaps surprising that the city council did not have a more permanent, reliable means of acquiring vessels at such times. This might be explained by a lack of public finances; and the increasing severity of flooding might have caught them unawares. The procedure described above feels almost improvised; it was undertaken at short notice when the disaster was already in full swing and clearly proved inadequate. Just as with the wider political structures of the Spanish Habsburg monarchy, there was an *ad hoc* creation of new, temporary response bodies – the flood commission appointed by the *asistente* in Seville might be compared to the variety of emergency *juntas* created by the king and his *consejos* to respond to specific problems, and indeed to the emergency *juntas de gobierno* installed in Andalusian cities later in the century following mid-century revolts.[97] Yet the pressures and problems prompted by flood were immediate and intense, surpassing the reactive capacities of the regular structures of urban government. Allowing for flexibility during a real crisis could have its benefits, by giving experts and politicians the chance to act quickly to developing circumstances; but the overall picture is chaotic.

Such a conclusion is also apparent when looking at how the city's political leaders tried to arrange for emergency supplies of food to be delivered to those stricken and stranded in the

[96] *Copia de una carta*, fo. 1v.
[97] On emergency *juntas* see José Luiz Bermejo Cabrero, *Estudios sobre la administración central española (Siglos XVII y XVIII)* (Madrid, 1982), pp. 77-9, Mackay, *Limits of Royal Authority*, p. 25, Storrs, *Resilience*, p. 186, and Chapter 1 of this thesis. For Seville's 1652 riot see Chapter 2 pp. 95-6.

flooded city, and other measures taken to keep the city stocked with bread. The *asistente* ordered his *tenientes*, when the city was still in the midst of flood, to communicate with bread sellers and those who brought essentials into the city and sold them in the plazas, that they were not to suspend their work, and should still sell their products daily, and indeed sell them 'sin postura'. In this way, according to the *Enundacion de Sevilla*, bread and meat was sold in the city throughout the crisis, 'casi a los ordinarios precios'.[98] It is clear from Caro's letter, however, that much of this was possible because of the efforts of Seville's hinterland – according to him, the surrounding towns (particularly Utrera, Alcalá del Río, and Carmona), knowing the conditions in the city, 'enviaron infinita cantidad de pan' which was able to enter the city through the Puerta de Carne, where a bridge outside the city walls remained in use through the flood.[99] It is difficult to say with any confidence whether the city owed these continuing supplies to the efforts of its political leaders, to the support of neighbouring municipalities, or indeed to the assessment of bread makers and sellers outside the city that they could use the crisis to their advantage by breaking into the Seville market. The author of the account in the Góngora manuscript also casts doubt on the claims of the *Enundacion* that food prices remained relatively stable, instead observing that the price of a loaf of bread doubled to six *reales* in flooded areas, whilst the meat that was on sale was 'mojado'.[100] So whilst the city adopted measures to establish some degree of protection, the limitations of such efforts are readily apparent. Once a flood had penetrated the city walls, gates and *husillos*, the political response became *ad hoc*, reliant on individual enterprise, and operated outside the normal political mechanisms.

Within such a context, the available sources emphasise both the importance of individual heroism and the cooperation of the city's various sources of leadership: *asistente* and city council, *regente* and *Real Audiencia*, the city's ecclesiastics led by the archbishop, and indeed the city's nobles all worked together to get through the crisis. The prospect of mutual oblivion was sufficient to overcome the jurisdictional conflicts and squabbling that otherwise defined relations between these officials and groups (see Chapter 2) – although, as we shall see, this cooperation

[98] *Enundacion*, fo. 2v. For the issue of controlling food prices in the city see Chapter 3, pp. 118-22.
[99] Caro to Quevedo, p. 245.
[100] 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', fo. 261v.

did not extend much beyond the flood itself. On Sunday 25 January, after the chaos of the night before, the *Enundacion de Sevilla* reports how the *regente* of the *Real Audiencia*, Alfonso Márquez de Prado, was directing the relief efforts of the city council officials (including the *asistente* and his *teniente*) from the balcony of his residence, as the height of buildings became a life-saving consideration as flood water surged along the streets at ground-level.[101] Members of different institutions worked in tandem to a shared objective, a point which Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga emphasises in his *Annales*:

> Superando la violencia de la calamidad a quanta solicitud pudieron poner atentos, y vigilantes, el Asistente, y Cabildo de la Ciudad, la Real Audiencia, y todos los Ministros [i.e. the flood commission] que se emplearon en el alivio de el afligido Pueblo.[102]

Lacking established structures to work within, many of these relief efforts assumed a charitable nature. In particular, personal wealth was used to supply crucial resources such as food. Juan de Setina in his letter describes how the *regente* spent more than one thousand *ducados* on relief efforts during the flood, whilst the *Enundacion de Sevilla* makes a point of praising 'el cuydado, caridad, y piadosos afectos que en estos dias mostraron los Cavalleros desta Ciudad'. In particular, Lorenzo de Cárdenas, the count of Puebla del Maestre, at that time the president of the *Casa de Contratación*, was marked out for praise – 'embarcandose algunas vezes, repartio por los anegados mucho pan, vizcocho, y dineros'.[103] The Góngora manuscript agrees that the count of Puebla del Maestre 'yba por las Iglesias repartiendo limosnas mui largamente', but that in general 'se exercito mui bien la charidad Seuillana' during the catastrophe.[104] Caro's letter to Quevedo includes similar words of praise for the city's nobles, again singling out the count of Puebla del Maestre. The nobles were examples to the rest of the city as to how to respond to disaster, although Caro also emphasises that the *pueblo* of Seville had been 'un ejemplo de los siglos en piedad y magnificencia'.[105] The particular attention given to the actions of the count of Puebla del Maestre is significant, as he was appointed *asistente* of the city in 1626, and his reputation of

[101] *Enundacion*, fo. 2r.
[102] Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales*, p. 646.
[103] *Copia de una carta*, fo. 2r and *Enundacion*, fo. 3r.
[104] 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', fo. 261r-v.
[105] Caro to Quevedo, pp. 244-5.

heroism during the flood helped him transition into his new role with a good name. Religious communities were also active in using their resources to provide for the afflicted. Priests from Seville's cathedral, for example, moved through the city on boats distributing bread, and the city's religious institutions acted in the same way, the city's Jesuits making particularly important interventions.[106] That charitable action was such a crucial facet of the city's response to flood indicates clearly the limitations of the local political structures and the reliance of the *asistente* on other civic figures at such times.

A final element in the political response to the 1626 flood that should be emphasised is the impact of the flood on Triana and the specific measures taken concerning that extra-mural, cross-river district. As outlined above, the events of a flood had a spatial logic, and the 'prevenciones ordinarias' of the city council were entirely orientated around the defence and management of the city walls, gates, and their *husillo* drains. This priority left Triana's residents to fend for themselves, and in the initial crisis the neighbourhood was totally isolated. The conditions in Triana after the flooding hit were even more chaotic and desperate than in the walled city, and the flood accounts describe how the district's residents sought refuge in its tallest edifices – the Castillo de Triana and the church of Santa Ana. In the latter building, the water reached the altar, and people were forced to cram inside the church's steeple.[107] Conditions quickly became lamentable, and one account describes how during the final incident of flooding from 10 Feburary, the church was full of the sick, and of pregnant women, two of whom gave birth during the flood itself, whilst seven people died.[108]

At the same time as bemoaning the terrible conditions, however, the *Enundacion de Sevilla* reports on what it portrays as the selfish, abominable behaviour of the district's residents. In the panic to reach the upper storeys of the tall buildings, the account describes how people were ruthless in their individual fights for safety, abandoning women and children – 'solo tratava cada uno de su remedio'.[109] In this reproach (from an account which was produced with official

[106] *Copia de una carta*, fo. 2r and *Enundacion*, fo. 2v.
[107] Caro to Quevedo, p. 241 and *Enundacion*, fo. 3r.
[108] *Enundacion*, fo. 4v.
[109] Ibid., fo. 3r.

backing) there is the suggestion that the residents of Triana were in some way to blame for their own misfortune (suggesting the author's prejudice against Triana's population), a natural conclusion given how disasters were typically interpreted as evidence of divine retribution. Regarding the political approach to flooding in Triana, where the city government still had direct responsibility but only one active *alguazil* (see pp. 24 and 33), the measures taken were entirely reactive, focusing on managing the aftermath after the event rather than preventing the damage in the first place (in contrast to the walled city). The *Enundacion* reports how 'dificultavase el passo de triana, y assi para la cosas de su govierno'.[110] The Puente de Triana had been destroyed, yet the first suggestion that the city council made any provision for the suburb was on 10 Feburary (some two weeks after the onset of serious flooding), when the *asistente* appointed eight 'diputados' to help deal with the crisis in Triana, moving across the flooded river with boats full of bread and other supplies. A particular focus of these deputies was the provision of justice in Triana: the *asistente* 'les dio comission para prender culpados, y hazer las sumairas y para todo la necesario al sustento y remedio de los vezinos de Triana'.[111] It is not clear what exactly the culpable were accused of, though the implication seems to be that criminal behaviour was rife in Triana at this time. The provision of general relief for the district's population is addressed as an afterthought. A disaster such as flood sharpened urban spatial realities – Seville's walls were a physical barrier, but that physical barrier symbolised social difference, and defined the limits of where the urban government sought to protect in an environmental crisis. The result was the neglect of Triana, exposed to the worst damage of the flood, and then left by the authorities without relief. All the accounts suggest that the damage of the flood was most severe in Triana. The author of the Góngora manuscript describes how the district 'quedo destruida, y despoblada', whilst Caro lamented that the whole area was flooded, estimating (and probably overestimating) that three thousand houses were flooded on that side of the river.[112] This pattern, of Triana being particularly adversely affected by serious flood, was repeated throughout the century, and serves

[110] Ibid., fo. 4r.
[111] Ibid.
[112] 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', fo. 261v and Caro to Quevedo in Palomo, *Historia Crítica*, pp. 241-2.

as a reminder that when studying the impact of disaster on urban areas, a keen appreciation for spatial variance must be maintained.

A number of aspects of the political response to flooding have been drawn out in the analysis above. Whilst the city council did have its 'prevenciones ordinarias' – procedures in place to prevent the penetration of flood waters into the city – these had limitations, both in terms of breadth of coverage and efficacy. For example, there was no clearly established process for the provision of boats to help traverse the new urban waterscape or of food for the city. Measures to supply the inundated city with both were *ad hoc*, and owed much to private initiative and heroism, and the help of neighbouring towns. Cooperation between the different institutions of the city and charity provided by individuals became crucial. Flood was such a direct and pressing catastrophe that it overrode the rivalries and disagreements that could otherwise define relations between bodies such as the city council and the *Real Audiencia*. Additionally, the city's spatial layout and the physical barriers and structures that defined it assumed an extra importance, as a result of which some areas (most notably Triana) were further marginalised. Finally, throughout the event the more formal, corporate means of political decision-making in the city, the regular meetings of the city council and *cabildo de jurados*, were completely suspended. At the centre of this complex, chaotic, and desperate scene was the *asistente*.

c) Popular criticism of Fernando Ramírez Fariñas and expectations of early modern urban rule

The position of *asistente* of Seville, as I explained in previous chapters, was a delicate one. They were royally appointed, yet their role required engagement with the specifics of urban space and the maintenance of working relationships with the local elite. Both of these concerns might necessitate conflict with the very monarchy whose interests they were employed to represent. At the same time, a close association with the crown might engender hostility from the urban populace. The tensions between centre and periphery – crown and city – inherent in the position of *asistente*, were especially apparent in the 1626 flood and particularly its aftermath. The role

that was demanded of an *asistente* during flood both developed from and contributed to the wider expectations of the role I outlined in previous chapters. I have explained how the *asistente*, like *corregidores* in other Spanish cities, was established as a source of paternal authority. Just as the king of Spain had to act as a father figure to the various kingdoms, the *asistente* was the father of the 'casa grande' of a city.[113] During flood this entailed acting as a heroic protector, and saving the lives of Seville's residents through feats of personal strength, fortitude, and bravery. The systems and infrastructure of the city were put under extreme stress, and the *asistente* was expected to 'get his hands dirty' to protect the city. Despite the 'royal' aspect to the position, in a flood the *asistente* had to respond decisively to a thoroughly 'urban' crisis.

Fernando Ramírez Fariñas owed his appointment as *asistente* in December 1622 to being a favourite of the count-duke of Olivares; he had worked with Philip IV's *valido* in 1624 during the royal visit of that year to secure the support of the city council for the extra tax demands placed on Seville, and also its approval for the sale of the jurisdictions of San Lúcar la Mayor and Castilleja de la Cuesta (towns just to the west of Seville) to Olivares.[114] There was fierce opposition to these changes from Seville's wider population, and as will be seen these matters were still keenly felt in 1626 and fed into the criticism endured by Fariñas in respect to the flood.

Yet during the flood Fariñas was portrayed, at least by the printed flood accounts, as trying to do all that he could to limit the damage and care for the afflicted. On the night of 24-5 January, when floodwaters had breached the Puerta Nueva, Fariñas was found at that location 'metido en agua', and his exertions continued into Sunday morning, when Fariñas's *teniente* Doctor Roano Corrionero found him 'muy mojado', having worked through the night to limit the damage. These efforts were sustained over the following days. By the time he was helping with repair works at the Alameda *husillo* on Thursday 29 January (following a drop in the water levels), Fariñas had apparently been working for four days 'sin desayunarse'.[115] Given that in 1626 Fariñas was seventy-two years old such efforts were surely commendable; but the efficacy of his

[113] Bobadilla, *Política*, 1.1.1, p. 16. See this thesis, pp. 54-5
[114] See Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares*, pp. 28, 153-4, and 165-6. For the sale of jurisdictions more generally, see Nader, *Liberty in Absolutist Spain*, which focuses more on towns purchasing their own jurisdictions from the cities.
[115] *Enundacion*, fo. 1v, 2r and 3v.

work might be called into question, and the risks of appointing an older *asistente* (something Bobadilla had warned could backfire in his *Política para corregidores*) are apparent in the criticisms he received, as we will see. The flood accounts do try to put a positive spin on the *asistente*'s behaviour. The quotations above are from the *Enundacion de Sevilla*, but one of the other accounts – the newly-discovered manuscript account (see above p. 205) – is similarly glowing in its appraisal, describing how 'el bueno del Assistente hace todo, y aun más de lo que puede, no para de día ni de nocha casi nadando a Cavallo en muchas calles, pluguiera a Dios', working with 'celo, industria, maña, authoridad y prudencia'.[116] The *Enundacion* in particular had reason to be favourable to Fariñas: the account was issued under direction of people within the *asistente*'s office as a response to criticism of the city government (and in particular the *asistente*). It is not clear why the other account should be so laudatory, but it seems likely that it was composed by someone with strong connections to Seville's city council. The positive descriptions of Fariñas's behaviour, however, refer back both to what Bobadilla had described as the ideal qualities of an urban governor, and to the previous exemplary conduct of former *asistentes* during flood (for example Bernadino de Avellaneda in 1603-4). It is now necessary to describe the criticisms that Fariñas received, which provide an insight into the environmental expectations placed on the *asistente* and how his actions were interpreted, discussed, and attacked by the city's populace.

Two of the flood accounts used in this chapter discuss the criticisms of the *asistente* directly. The newly-discovered account reports the criticisms only so as to emphasise their unfairness. It explains how there were many 'maldiciones' made against the *asistente*, which 'es lastímosa cosa oír', indicating that they were widespread by suggesting that everyone – 'todos' – was repeating them. The account dismisses these criticisms as 'desverguenças', and instead praises the actions of the *asistente* and excuses his shortcomings by arguing that during his tenure events worked against him and made his job more difficult than it had been for other *asistentes* (though it does not specify what these were, apart from the flood itself).[117] The Góngora

[116] *La avenida de sevilla*, p. 422.
[117] Ibid., p. 422 and 424.

manuscript provides more information about the hostility directed toward the *asistente* and what provoked it. Having described the damage caused by the first round of flooding on 25 January 1626, the manuscript explains:

> La culpa de auerse entrado el Rio imputaban a el Asistente, y a los Diputados de las puertas, que se fueron a dormir. Han dicho al pobre viejo [Fariñas] mil injurias, y en la Feria ubo menester retirarse, temiendo algun desacato.[118]

This manuscript thus reveals both why Fariñas was facing criticism over the flood, and that the public's ire was such as to have him fearing for his safety. The key failure of the *asistente*, in the view of many of the city's people, was retiring to bed on the night of Saturday 24 January, when water was threatening several of the city's gates. The *Enundacion* describes how this decision was reached – following repeated inspections of the flood defences, the *asistente* accompanied by his *tenientes* and the *alcalde* made one final inspection of the gates, and only after 'afirmaron que quedaban muy seguras' did they return to their quarters.[119]

Yet this is clearly not how Fariñas's actions were interpreted in the days and weeks following the flood. The Góngora manuscript reproduces one of the means by which criticism of Fariñas was expressed, a pair of sonnets composed at the time (see Appendix 3, pp. 259-60). It is unclear how exactly these sonnets were distributed or performed, yet given that the author of the manuscript was able to reproduce them, they must have either been written down and disseminated physically, or been known well-enough orally to be recited on demand. One of the satirical verses is a series of three sonnets structured as an imagined conversation between the Guadalquivir River and the Tagarete, whilst the other is directly addressed to the *asistente*.[120] Both touch on Fariñas's poor stewardship of the city government during the flood, but both also indicate the resentment felt in respect to how the *asistente* was handling the city's dealings with the crown, and particularly the relationship between Fariñas and Olivares. In the imagined conversation, the Tagarete expresses shock at the damage done to the city – 'Quantos templos por mi son profunados? O errores contra Dios introducidos?' Yet by the end of this sonnet, the

[118] 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', fo. 261v.
[119] *Enundacion*, fo. 1r.
[120] 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', fo. 263r-v. I have reproduced the full sonnets, as they were transcribed in Góngora's manuscript, in Appendix 3.

personified tributary turns the blame onto the *asistente* – 'Otra a sido el Autor de tantos daños' – pointing out the 'errores infinitos' he had committed, and concluding 'Deselo por Justicia al Asistente'. The following sonnet then draws a connection between the Tagarete and Fariñas –the tributary *arroyo* was born 'pobre', but then grew by taking water from the river. Yet the Tagarete expressed reservations – just because it was a 'charco' (a puddle), did it have to accept the scraps of the Guadalquivir? Fariñas is then described as doing exactly that from Olivares, at far too high a cost – the concession of fresh *millones* and *donativos*, the selling of territories from Seville's jurisdiction and the taking of too many trips (six) back to Madrid during his tenure. Criticism over his role in the flood thus led to the voicing of wider dissatisfaction at his performance in office. The sonnet more directly targeted at Fariñas repeated most of these grievances, and concludes with the damning suggestion that the *asistente* would go 'al Infierno' for his collusion with Olivares at Sevilla's expense. These attacks were personal, and also put the failure of Seville's city council to adequately deal with flood onto the shoulders of the *asistente* alone – particularly in the context of being seen as a servant of the locally-disliked Olivares.

The response of the *asistente* and the city council to these criticisms was to produce and circulate their own version of events. The *Enundacion de Sevilla*, although it doesn't explicitly state so, was issued as a direct response to condemnation of the city government, and at times reads as a panegyric for their behaviour, particularly that of Fariñas and his *tenientes*. It was printed by Francisco de Lyra, who would later be trusted by Diego Hurtado de Mendoza to print his proposals for a stone bridge in 1631 (see p. 177). Copies of the account today survive in the British Library, the Biblioteca Nacional de España, and the Biblioteca Colombina in Seville itself, and there was probably a wide potential readership for such accounts.[121] From the text's introductory passages, it is clear that the focus of the text was to exonerate the city's leadership of blame. In justifying the account, the anonymous author (probably someone within the city council hierarchy) argues that although there survived, in general, 'poca noticia' of past events, as the ancients lacked the means to record things easily, for some contemporaries it was important to

[121] See Henry Ettinghausen (ed.), *Noticias del siglo XVII: Relaciones españoles de sucesos naturales y sobrenaturales* (Barcelona, 1995), p. 11.

know 'la verdad', 'sin que derramada por tantas bocas, cada uno la cuente de diferente manera'.[122] The reference to a multitude of 'mouths' seems an unambiguous reference to the gossip and barbed sonnets aimed at the *asistente*. The account begins in earnest by asserting that 'ello sucediò desta' – another indication that the *Enundacion* was framed as a corrective to other narratives that were in circulation.[123] Although it does not announce its author, the text was printed with licence from Luis Ramírez, one of the *tenientes* of the *asistente*; adding this fact to the emphasis within the narrative on presenting a truthful account and the relentless praise of the conduct of the municipal government, that it was in many respects an official account should not be in doubt. Floods were important moments in civic memory, and the city's leaders tried to ensure that their own reputations were not blemished, mobilising print culture to defend their political legacies: a reminder that floods cannot be understood as purely 'natural' events. Frequently, the surviving evidence relied on by historians has an outwardly political purpose.

The political intent of the *Enundacion* was manifested in its portrayal of the actions of the urban government, particularly the *asistente*, and in exonerating them from any blame for the damage caused by the 1626 flood. When describing how the rain fell on 17 January, the account emphasises that, despite there being 'aguas continuas', the rain was 'no con tanta fuerça, que se puediesse temer la avenida que despues se vido, respeto de aver sido otras vezes mucho mayores, y mas continuas, sin aver llegado a salir el rio de madre'.[124] Additionally, as the full title suggests, there is a concern to stress that the officials took all the necessary measures for the city's protection and relief. On Tuesday 20 January, the *asistente* is said to have given orders that 'las prevenciones ordinarias' be put in place, and the flood defences were then monitored regularly. On the key decision taken by the *asistente* to retire to bed on the night of 24 January, the *Enundacion* is at pains to explain the step was only taken following the advice of experts that the defences 'quedaban muy seguras'. Once the flood waters had breached the defences he woke quickly and instantly got to work to stem the flow of water into the city. The impression throughout the *Enundacion* is that Ramírez Fariñas acted with authority and confidence during the

[122] *Enundacion de Sevilla*, fo. 1r.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.

entire flood, and that he could not have done any more to protect the city and its residents. He is portrayed as putting his own body on the line, working with minimal rest under extremely difficult conditions. Overall, during the flooding of 1626

> No faltò en este tiempo el animo del señor Asistente, que cuydadoso discurria al remedia de todo, acompañado de sus tenientes, y de Don Alonso de Bolaños, y Don Enrique de Salinas, Alcaldes desta real Audiencia, y otros Veintiquatros, y Cavalleros.[125]

Fariñas is described as an effective leader, of exemplary and indeed kingly conduct; he was a paternalistic figure of support for the city in the mould of Bobadilla's description of how a *corregidor* should act in office. Concluding the account, the author of the *Enundacion* expressed hopes that the repairing of buildings and cleaning of the city would be swiftly concluded 'mediante la ayuda de Dios, y cuydado de buenos ministros'.[126] Overall, the *Enundacion* appears to project an officially-endorsed image of how the *asistente* wanted to be perceived as acting during flood.

Fariñas, however, was not to be the 'good minister' that completed these restorative efforts, as he was not in post for much longer. The *Real Cámara* had in fact suggested replacements the previous December, and Philip IV had chosen the count of Puebla del Maestre as the new *asistente*, even though he had previously turned down the post and was not directly suggested on this occasion by the king's ministers. It was 26 May 1626 before the count took up the post, and in his note to the *Cámara* letting them know, he explained that whilst he had previously turned down the role as he was engaged in other matters of importance to the monarchy, including working in Seville itself as president of the *Casa de Contratación*, he had now changed his mind – 'El hauer visto los naufraxios que a padecido y el estado en que ese alla [Seville], me obligan a azetar este cargo'.[127] The condition of the city following the flood seems to have been a major factor in the count's decision, as he felt an obligation to strive to help save a city he already was living and working in. During the flood, as described above, the count had

[125] Ibid, fo. 3v.
[126] Ibid., fo. 4v.
[127] Consulta of 16 September 1624, president of *Real Cámara* to Philip IV, 4 December 1625, consulta of 20 December 1625, and count of Puebla del Maestre to president of the *Cámara*, 26 May 1626, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 14 and 16-17.

been particularly active in giving charity and providing his labour to help the city. In the figure of the count, the city had a new *asistente* who had demonstrated his fatherly, noble qualities during the city's time of need. Fariñas, meanwhile, was presumably glad to be able to leave a city whose population had largely turned against him. As a favourite of Olivares, he had no problem continuing his work in the *Real Consejo*, and receiving royal commissions until his death in 1638. Towards the end of his life, his handling of the 1626 flood does not seem to have had a particularly adverse impact on the rest of his career.

Yet the wider response to his actions in the 1626 flood demonstrates a number of key themes of early modern urban government, especially concerning the role of the *asistente* and the relationship between crown and city. Floods were key tests of an urban governor's leadership – they were expected to respond quickly and effectively to environmental problems that threatened the city, and would be held to account by the local populace if they failed to do so. In the process of receiving popular criticism, wider issues of government would be brought to bear. Environmental problems and disasters could serve as flashpoints revealing other sources of dissatisfaction, particularly those that demonstrated that the monarchy and its appointed representatives were out of touch with and did not care for the interests of its cities.

d) 'El caso de estrema necessidad': tensions between civic and ecclesiastical authority in flood-hit Seville

The damage caused by the flood of 1626 and the corresponding economic costs were enormous. It is not within the scope of this thesis to enumerate these costs (although such a study placed within the wider context of Seville's financial contributions to the monarchy would elaborate many of its themes and may do much to explain the city's seventeenth-century decline); but the efforts of the city to recover and repair what was damaged further implicated the *asistente*, and help to shed light on the political dynamics of the city and on the limits of royal authority. In particular, an argument between the city council (with the support of the *Real Audiencia*) and the city's secular clergy over monetary contributions to repair the city walls reveals the challenges faced by local

governors in maintaining the urban infrastructure and in coping with environmental factors. Religious authority was able to take much of the credit for a cessation of violent weather, which was seen at least in part as a punishment from God, but subsequently abdicated responsibility for helping the city to get back on its feet, leaving blame at the door of the city council.

The flood caused damage that went far beyond the capacity of the city authorities to repair without financial help. Much of the cost was borne by private residents. Estimating the overall cost to the city and its residents in his *Annales*, Ortiz de Zúñiga placed the total at four million *ducados*.[128] Not only were the basic supplies needed much harder and more expensive to procure, but thousands of houses needed repair works, merchants and traders lost substantial quantities of their stock (and thus livelihood), and several ships were run aground and heavily damaged on the banks of the river.[129] The city council had a pressing and urgent need to bring order to affairs such as food prices, and to get enough food into the city (see pp. 118-22). There were also longer-term implications to consider. Months after the flooding had passed, water was still present in the city, pooling in low-lying areas and resisting the city's drainage system. This water was a risk to public health – creating 'nociuos vapores' in the heat of summer (as Ortiz de Zúñiga observed) and fostering sickness and disease.[130] The city council was certainly alive to these risks: in the months following the flood a *junta* of medics was formed and given the task of 'propuso algunas cosas en orden a la salud de la republica, y mando diesen su parecer'. The report of the junior member of this medical commission survives in the Biblioteca Nacional, and demonstrates how the challenges of a disaster such as flood could lead on to far-reaching discussions. The text touches on issues of diet (including establishing precise meal times), the importance of regular exercise (and how this was to be best practised), and the measures relating to urban maintenance and infrastructure that should be taken after a flood.[131] Among the latter

[128] Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales*, p. 646.
[129] The Góngora account describes how twelve thousand *arrobas* (a unit of measurement equivalent to around 500g) of oil were lost, whilst small shops and taverns suffered the destruction of their supplies of sugar and clothing. Small traders and wholesale merchants were impacted alike. 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', fo. 261v.
[130] Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales*, p. 646.
[131] Jerónimo de Contreras, *Discurso y apuntamientos en razon de lo que denotan los temporales, y inundacion, y otras causas de enfermedades que a avido en Sevilla, y remedios para su preservacion:*

included the removal of excess water from the city (in particular from houses where it had pooled), the cleaning of the city streets and their being repaved where necessary and sealed with lime, and the burning (at a safe distance outside the city walls) of soaked animal hides and of animal carcasses which might otherwise spread disease.[132] The city council, however, was unable to enact all the steps that the medical experts recommended, presumably mainly due to a shortage of funds, and the medical consequences of flood would continue to hurt the city throughout the seventeenth century, most notably in 1649 when the deadly plague of that year had its spread facilitated by stagnant water that pooled in the city following heavy rain in late March.[133] Even on matters of life and death, Seville's urban government, led by the *asistente*, only had a limited capacity to act and respond to the challenges of the post-flood city.

The issue of repairing the city's walls was a similarly vital one. As has been described, the walls were not only a physical barrier, but also of great symbolic importance, a key component of Seville's identity. However, they were far from the only structures in need of urgent repair works. Nor was restoring the city walls the only step the city needed to take to guard itself against future flood. The extent of the task facing the urban authorities can be gauged from a *Memorial* that survives in the Biblioteca Colombina, compiled by then-*maestro mayor* Andrés de Oviedo. Oviedo served as *maestro mayor* of the city 1620-9, after his elder brother Juan had occupied the same post 1601-19. His profession thus passed to him through familial instruction, and much of his initial work was on churches, demonstrating the breadth of expertise needed by the *maestros mayores*.[134]

His 1626 document, which has not been given the attention by historians that its wealth of detail deserves, suggests a series of measures to limit potential future damage from flood.[135] These

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dirigido a los Señores Regente, y Oydores, y Alcaldes de la Real Audiencia de la dicha ciudad (1626). BN MSS 18400 (H.6-7).

[132] Ibid., fo. 6r.

[133] 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', fo. 265r-v. The Góngora account describes how in March 1649 extended rain led to the swelling of the Guadalquivir; the ensuing threat of flood had led to the sealing of the *husillos*; but this measure enabled the pooling of rainwater which flooded 'la tercia parte de la ciudad'. The connection between the unsanitary conditions created by flood and the ensuing plague is made absolutely clear.

[134] Cruz Isidoro, *Arquitectura Sevillana*, pp. 195-6. For the *maestros mayores* see Chapter 4, pp. 166-9.

[135] *Memorial de Andrés de Oviedo, Maestro Mayor de Sevilla. A la Ciudad. Dividido en seys partes* (1626), BCC 33-4-16(18).

measures were not limited to proposals that involved the city itself, but also suggested the modification and reshaping of the surrounding landscape. I will briefly describe some of the wider measures proposed in this document before moving on to the specific issue of the city walls, as the blueprint suggested by Oviedo, if followed by the city council, would have resulted in a city that possessed a 'culture of flood management' – built, social, and political structures orientated around the threat of flood.[136] The reasons behind the city's failure to install enough of these structures are also revealing of the problems the seventeenth-century *asistentes* faced, working in a city that has come to represent Spain's wider 'decline'.

Oviedo, addressing his remarks to the *asistente*, recommended not only that the city council increase their awareness of the movements of the Guadalquivir further upriver (in part by improving communications with the fishermen and sailors who used it), but that they also attempt to divert some of the river's water into areas where it would do less damage by digging canals. One such area was the so-called Vega de Triana (see Figure 8, p. 147), to the west of the city and the neighbourhood of Triana, a low-lying area which in previous centuries had functioned as a floodplain, a cultivated area used for growing olives, which Oviedo recommended be returned to its former use.[137] He also advocated the construction of a new dike along the river's course, fitted with stone towers and its own *husillo* system, to further regulate the water flow and keep the river at a further distance from the city walls.[138] In the city itself, meanwhile, in areas particularly prone to being flooded by pooling rainwater (such as the Alameda), Oviedo proposed the construction of wooden platforms so that residents might still be able to leave their homes and move through the city.[139] In addition, Oviedo advocated reforms to how the city council might arrange their human resources and organisational processes in respect to flood. In doing so he came close to echoing some of the wider criticisms that Fariñas had received, by arguing that there had been 'confusion' in how flooding was dealt with; in particular, Oviedo lamented the lack of properly trained and equipped professional craftspeople at the gates and *husillos* of the walls. Whilst

[136] A phrase of Greg Bankoff's, *Cultures of Disaster*, p. 152.
[137] *Memorial de Andrés de Oviedo*, fo. 3v-4r.
[138] Ibid., fo. 7v-8v.
[139] Ibid., fo. 6v.

accepting that Fariñas had appointed 'Cavalleros Diputados' (i.e. the members of the specially-created flood commission), Oviedo noted the 'poca noticia y conocimiento' of those appointed, and that their lives had been put at risk by having to work without the necessary expertise or resources.[140] Oviedo argued that the appointment of new professional craftspeople was vital for the city's defence, recommending at least two *maestros* (a carpenter and a caulker) be appointed to each river-facing *husillo*, and four such men be assigned to each river-facing gate. Previously, with only one *maestro* tasked with organising the overall work of sealing gates and *husillos*, there had scarcely been time to arrange for two gates to be shut before the water level of the river could become threatening. Whilst acknowledging that these men would have to be paid, Oviedo suggests that the monarchy might supply the necessary funds, as it would be in the king's interest to make the city more secure.[141] As part of these preparations, Oviedo also urged the city council to maintain reserve supplies at each of the city gates and *husillos* – of wooden boards, planks and metal rods for their reinforcement – whilst in order to try and ensure the quality of work done by the craftspeople, there should be frequent inspections performed by the council and also a system by which carpenters were 'examinados' to make sure they were skilled enough for the work.[142]

Overall, Oviedo's plans were extensive and impressive, but ultimately unfeasible. The city council and *asistente* struggled to implement even basic repairs, as we will see, let alone effect a thorough restructuring of the city to cope with flood. Whilst the *maestro mayor* optimistically believed that royal financial assistance might be secured for the project, in reality such funding was unavailable. From previous chapters we know that increasing financial demands were placed on Castile's population from the crown (see p. 103), and this tension between court centre and urban periphery is an under-explored aspect to Spanish 'decline'. Oviedo was advocating a system that allowed experts to play a larger role – reducing the direct influence of unqualified royal officials – which may have been an unpopular notion to the crown; but a lack of investment in environmental projects caused major problems, the political implications of which were left to urban governors such as the *asistentes* to manage.

[140] Ibid., fo. 11v-12r.
[141] Ibid., fo. 12r-13r.
[142] Ibid., fo. 14r-16r.

The specific issue of the city walls in the aftermath to the 1626 flood brings these problems and some of the wider challenges faced by the *asistente* into relief. Oviedo's *Memorial* had been clear that the city walls were in need of attention, arguing not only that some sections should be repaired, but also that they required extension and redevelopment. Specifically, he suggested that a new stretch of wall should be constructed from the Macarena gate to the Jerez gate, as this section was particularly weak and low-lying. Twelve new towers along this length of wall would provide extra reinforcement. Additionally, the *husillos* needed to be improved and raised so that they were above the potential line of the current. He admitted that such work would be expensive: new works alone might cost the city a further one million *ducados*. Yet when concluding his document, Oviedo listed work on the walls as one of the four key steps that had to be taken for the 'remedio' of the city.[143] The city council did set about trying to organise these repairs, although the royal provision permitting them to raise the necessary money did not arrive until October 1626, once the new *asistente*, the count of Puebla del Maestre, had taken up his post. Even with royal approval for the works, however, raising the money was far from simple, and the city council ran into the opposition of Seville's secular clergy, who claimed clerical exemption from the taxes that the councilmen were trying to raise. Although during the crisis itself the cathedral in particular had worked with the civic authorities to try and minimise the flood's impact, in the aftermath their attitude was evidently one of stubborn uncooperativeness.

In response, in early 1627, the *asistente* worked closely with the *Real Audiencia* to issue a legal argument overriding ecclesiastical objections. The lawyer of the *Audiencia* who formulated the document (addressed to the *asistente* and city council), Luis Berro de Montalvo, had to engage with both canon as well as civil law to demonstrate the city's case, which they could then take to the monarchy or even to the Vatican. He pointed out that far from being immutable, laws could be made to change 'por la necesidad'. Whilst Aristotle and Cicero had both argued the importance to a city of maintaining its walls, Montalvo brought the argument away from the realm of bookish learning by pointing out that 'estamos el dia de oy conociendo la verdad por la experiencia, de tal

[143] Ibid., fo. 5v-7r and 16v.

fuerte que nadie duda quan preciso y necessario sea el reparo de los muros desta ciudad'.[144] The lawyer also acknowledged that there were indeed cases in which civil law should not be applied to the clergy, but insisted that this was not one of them.[145] Montalvo emphasised the royal mandate to raise money, the urgent need, and the fact that the churches would benefit directly from the work done; he also appealed to the the clergy's common sense and decency. Was it not completely unreasonable, he insisted, for the city to have to send a representative to Rome to appeal to the Pope for exemption of ecclesiastical immunity from taxes? In a case where there were two potential evils – in this case 'el temor cierto' that the river might enter the city again against the interference of secular authority with ecclesiastics – was it not better to avoid the greater of the two, the river?[146] Further, he argued that the walls themselves might be considered 'santos y sagrados, intactos, y inviolables', and that in contributing to their repair the clergy would be performing a pious act.[147] These arguments were possibly effective at drawing some level of contribution from the city's clergy (the records of any payments do not survive). However, that the council had to go to such lengths when raising money for essential and urgent repair works following a serious disaster is in itself revealing. The city council not only lacked the money from their own reserves, but faced a struggle to raise funds. The walls were repaired, potentially with ecclesiastical help, but it was a struggle.

A contrast can be drawn between the stubborn refusal of Seville's clergy to help pay for the repair of the city walls, and the role of organised religion during the disaster itself. This contrast emphasises that whilst Seville's clergy played what was seen as a key role in causing hostile weather to be dispelled, the civic government not only faced blame for what went wrong during a disaster, but could not claim full credit when the city was delivered safely from harm. As has been described, floods were interpreted as signs of divine wrath in early modern Europe, and

[144] *Por la muy noble y muy leal ciudad de Sevilla. Defendido ser muy justa la pretension de la junta de las obras de las murallas desta muy illustre ciudad, y provision Real de su Magestad, en que manda se reparen sus muros, por repartimiento que para ello se haga a las casas desta ciudad, aunque sean de Yglesias*. (Seville, 1627), BCC 33-4-16(17), fo. 8r-v.
[145] Ibid., 16r. In so doing, he referenced Bobadilla's *Política para corregidores*, 1.2.18, further evidence of the active use of that text (see Chapter 1, p. 57).
[146] Ibid., fo. 14r and 16v.
[147] Ibid., fo. 16r.

this was certainly the case in 1626 in Seville. For Ortiz de Zúñiga (not a cleric, but a councilman of the city), the flood was a punishment from God, and when the intense rains began on 17 January 'parecia que se disponia otro universal diluvio'.[148] Accordingly, when it came to describing how the flood eventually subsided, Zúñiga stressed the efficacy of religious procession and prayer. The archbishop led the cathedral chapter of Seville in organised processions during the flooding itself, on 6 February, which gave notice to God of the city's remorse and thus placated divine justice. These processions included the use of holy relics (a *lignum crucis*, a fragment of the cross, for example) which were thrust towards the heavens in a bid to calm God's anger, alongside processional sculptures of the Virgin Mary.[149] Prayer, religious procession and holy objects were perceived as vital in protecting the city against flood as urban infrastructure and the emergency responses of the urban government. Other accounts also stressed the importance of prayer to the cessation of violent weather – Juan Beltrán de la Cueva wrote that only after twenty-seven days of continuous prayer by all the parishes and monasteries and a novena performed in the *Iglesia Mayor* did 'Dios nos tenga de su mano' and deliver the city from harm.[150] The author of the account compiled by Góngora gave a more sober appraisal of the religious response, but also reported on the procession of the *lignum crucis* on Monday 26 January, and connected the religious sentiment on show to the impressive charitableness of Seville's population to flood victims.[151] The city council assisted and cooperated in these processions, yet in the weeks and months following the flood this sense of mutual support was not upheld by the city's religious institutions. Clerical opposition to paying for repairs to the city walls reveals that the questions asked of the *asistente*'s leadership during the flood endured long after the flood itself had passed – indeed, a new *asistente* was in office by the time many issues were addressed. These problems connected legal and jurisdictional disagreements to real issues of urban space, and exposed the damaging impact of royal tax-raising efforts in the cities of Castile, who were left unable to afford basic recovery works.

[148] Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Annales*, p. 646.
[149] Ibid.
[150] *Relacion verdadera*, fo. 2v.
[151] 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', fo. 261r.

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Seville's Great Flood of 1626 was a comprehensively 'urban' crisis, threatening the city's residents and compromising its built spaces. Although the plague of 1649 resulted in far greater loss of life, the 1626 flood in other respects was as thorough a challenge for the *asistente*-led city council, and demonstrates the extent of the impact of environmental and 'natural' factors on early modern Seville. The political response was patchy and *ad hoc*, and the limitations indicate that centre-periphery dynamics in Habsburg Spain did not provide localities with what they needed. By turning now, in concluding this chapter, to the flood of 1683-4, it will be apparent how little had changed in respect to the political response to flooding in Seville. The same structures – built and institutional – were still in place and the same behaviour was expected of the *asistente*. This failure to adapt to environmental pressures is an underexplored aspect of Spain's 'decline'.

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iii. Environmental crisis, flooding and the self-perception of decline in Seville, 1676-84

Between 1626 and 1683 Seville suffered flooding on four further occasions – in 1627, 1633, 1642 and 1649. Of these, only that of 1649 was of any severity, but it had devastating consequences as the conditions it produced in the city contributed greatly to facilitating the spread of plague in that year. In the ensuing plague, the population was reduced by half and the environmental policies and crisis management of the city council were again exposed as thoroughly inadequate. I will not dwell on the 1649 flood in this thesis. The events of 1649 have been discussed in recent work on Seville's response to plague,[152] and I do not wish to suggest an environmentally deterministic interpretation of Seville's decline. The environment played its part, yet there was nothing inevitable about the dynamics of the city's relationship with its river. A lack of investment in

[152] Bowers, *Plague and Public Health*, and Cook and Cook, *Plague Files*.

urban infrastructure, a reliance on old models of flood management, and the persistence of urban divisions even in the face of environmental adversity all spoke to failures at the level of the city leadership and that of the Habsburg court in Madrid – neither Philip IV nor Charles II recognised the result of neglecting the impact of climate, environment, and disaster on its cities. By shifting the view to the end of the century and telling the story of the flood of 1683-4, we can see how these issues endured across the century. Several themes from the 1626 flood will recur, including the spatial dynamic of the flood which marginalised certain areas, the political processes used in response, and the role of the *asistente*. By the 1680s, however, a more fatalistic interpretation of flooding was being adopted which demonstrates the feelings of despair and disillusion in late seventeenth-century Spain.

The late 1670s had seen the successful coup of Don Juan José of Austria in 1677, followed by his death in September 1679 after two underwhelming years of government. He had promised reform but had not delivered, and his rule was followed by the duke of Medinaceli's indecisive and ineffective time as *valido* until 1685. Military expenditure on European conflicts remained debilitating. The army in Flanders alone was sent one hundred and fifty thousand *ducados* each month in 1678 and 1680, despite the entire budget for the latter year standing at just over eight hundred and fifty thousand.[153] Across the kingdom, there were extreme price fluctuations for essential products such as wheat, as the government of Charles II struggled to bring the currency under control. In an attempt to put a stop to continual debasement and instability, in 1680 a massive reduction in the value of the coinage was announced, alongside the wiping of old debts to the crown and a grace period in which more recent debts could be paid at the old rate. As a long-term measure, this step has been praised by historians as brave and necessary.[154] Yet in the short term, the effects were financially crippling, causing bankruptcies across Spain and leaving many of the worst-affected towns unable to pay royal taxes. In Seville,

[153] Storrs, *Resilience*, p. 114 and Henry Kamen, 'The Decline of Castile: The Last Crisis', *The Economic History Review*, 17:1 (1964), p. 66.
[154] Kamen, *Spain in the Later Seventeenth Century*, pp. 103-4 and Grafe, *Distant Tyranny*, p. 136.

this economic pinch was keenly felt (with the city still a crucial cog in the Habsburg monarchy's fiscal machine) and was exacerbated by environmental conditions.[155]

The late 1670s and early 1680s was a period of dryness and drought throughout Andalusia. An account of these years written by a cleric in the city, Juan de Loaisa (unfortunately not much else is known about this author), describes how from December 1679 until April 1680 there was no rain, which led to religious processions, penitential demonstrations, and days of continuous prayer, which eventually brought the 'milagro' of the return of rain.[156] Other environmental events were connected by Loaisa to the drought, as he records that on 9 October 1680 there was a 'gran temblor de la tierra' which was felt across Europe.[157] 1683 saw Seville suffer from another spell of sustained drought, which came at huge financial and human cost, and put the city's infrastructure under strain. The general conditions were vividly described by Francisco de Godoy in his account of the city's misfortunes at this time:

> La tierra de casi toda la Andaluzia se secó; los frutos se quemaron; los arboles se ardian; los granos se fueron à mendigar en estrañas Provincias; los ganados mayores y menores perecieron, porque à unos, y otros falta paja, que poder rumiar en los establos y en los montes, y valles yerva que pacer. Encareciòse de necessidad el pan, y por su carestia murieron muchos à manos de la necessidad.[158]

The Góngora manuscript's account of 1683-4, meanwhile, emphasised the intense heat of the summer, and how life in Seville was made 'mui penoso por esta causa'. As drought continued into the autumn, the field labourers were late in ploughing and sowing the fields.[159] Food supplies were not the only resource under threat. Loiasa described how the city lacked sufficient drinking water, as 'se secaron muchas fuentes, y mariantales, y algunas rios, y todos los Arroyos'. The Caños de Carmona (the city's main aqueduct, see p. 172) also failed, and the city council appointed a special *alguazil* to go through the city with a clay jug of water for the relief of those most in need of water.[160] There was also an awareness of national conditions being equally challenging, as Loasia reports that the archbishop of Zaragoza had written in a letter that in the

[155] Jiménez, 'Los donativos de la ciudad de Sevilla', p. 301.
[156] Juan de Loaisa, *Seca y lluvias de los años 1683 y 1684 en Sevilla*, AMS XI (folio).1.45, fo. 179r-181r.
[157] Loaisa, *Seca y lluvias*, fo. 181r. For this earthquake see Muñoz and Bernal, 'El temblor de 1680', p. 339.
[158] Godoy, *Catolica Consolatoria Exhortacion*, fo. 248v.
[159] 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', fo. 265v.
[160] Loaisa, *Seca y lluvias*, fo. 177r-v

taverns of that city a cup of water was being sold at the same price as 'el mejor vino'.[161] A national context of political uncertainty and financial instability was therefore exacerbated at the local level by the impact of the climate. Again, Geoffrey Parker's concept of a 'fatal synergy' between human and natural factors as producing moments of 'crisis' is a useful framework for understanding what was happening in later seventeenth-century Seville.[162]

The flood of 1683-4 stands out in that it immediately followed the challenging environmental conditions described above. Pre-existing problems for the city authorities were intensified, and the result was a city no longer able to sustain the role that was expected of it by the monarchy. Godoy reports that rain began to fall on St Andrew's Day (30 November), before briefly stopping, then resuming on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (8 December), from which time it did not cease raining for two months. The Góngora manuscript puts the date at 27 November when the rain began, but all the sources agree that the rainfall was continuous into early February 1684.[163] These resulted in ten separate occurrences of flood. The city council first ordered that the *husillos* be sealed on 23 December 1683, and from then on followed a familiar pattern, as the authorities struggled to maintain control over water levels in the city. By 30 January 1684 the *husillos* had already been sealed and reopened on six occasions. Loaisa describes the emotional impact of the sense of constant threat ('muchos dias y noches de este tiempo de estos tres meses fueron espantosas') and that it felt as though God wanted to destroy the city and its residents through a repeat of the Universal Flood. Every day, he recounts, was spent in prayer that Divine Justice would not execute 'el mismo azote' on them.[164] Flood *diputados* were assigned to work at the various gates, as before, although it seems that the seriousness of the 1684 flooding was such that it prompted new measures. For example, the Casa de Moneda (the city's Royal Mint, between the cathedral and Torre del Oro) was threatened by flood water from the Tagarete, leading to the use of wooden buttresses where they had never

[161] Ibid., fo. 177v
[162] Parker, *Global Crisis*, p. xxv.
[163] Godoy, *Catolica Consolatoria Exhortacion*, fo. 249r-250r and 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', fo. 265v.
[164] Loaisa, *Seca y lluvias*, fo. 184r-185r.

before been needed.[165] As in previous floods, including that of 1626, Triana was particularly affected – Loaisa describes how there was no building in that neighbourhood not at least partly submerged in water by 12 February, leaving its families particularly hungry and vulnerable, whilst the Góngora account reports that 'no abia otra cosa sino agua' from Castilleja and Tomares to the west up to the walls of the city – only the very top of buildings in that area could be seen.[166] (For a view of this area see Figure 8, p. 147.) Again, following the pattern of previous floods, boats were desperately requisitioned to facilitate travel in the flooded city, and the Alameda served as something of a staging area for this transportation. Despite boats being the only possible means of travelling through much of the city, Loaisa reports that the sight of boats was still feared, as they were also used to carry the bodies of those who had died in the flood. Law and order, again as in 1626, deteriorated as the authorities were less able to respond to situations and many buildings were left abandoned. There was an increase in thefts in particular, and in response the city council organised boat patrols to go through certain districts and deter opportunistic criminals.[167] Between 1626 and 1684 there had been no review or reform of the flood management structures of the city. Measures recommended in the first thirty years of the century were still necessary in the last fifteen. The same problems were being responded to using the same techniques, which were frequently *ad hoc*, in what must be described as a failure by both city and crown to adapt to an increasing threat to the city.

Continuity is also evident in the reported conduct of the *asistente*. The post at this time was occupied by Luis de Salcedo y Arbizu (1630-93). Arbizu had studied at the University of Valladolid, at one of its major colleges, was a member of the *Consejo de Castilla*, and in 1690 would become the first count of Gómara, with the title being created for him by Charles II. He would also work as part of the *Real Cámara*. As a *letrado*, a newly-titled member of the upper nobility, and an experienced royal statesman, he was a typical late-seventeenth century *asistente*; yet he had only entered the role on 15 November 1683 and the floods were thus a stringent early

[165] 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', fo. 269r.
[166] Loaisa, *Seca y lluvias*, fo. 199r and 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', fo. 269v.
[167] Loaisa, *Seca y lluvias*, fo. 194r-v.

test of his leadership.[168] For Juan de Loaisa, at least, this was a test that Arbizu passed with flying colours. The *asistente*, Loaisa described, 'pareció venido del Cielo con especial Providencia para esta ocasion', as he not only toiled at the gates and *husillos* to prevent the penetration of the river, but also negotiated with the bread vendors to keep the prices as stable as possible. In terms strikingly similar to those with which the behaviour of Fernando Ramírez Fariñas was described in 1626, Arbizu supposedly 'no parar, ni sosegar de dia, ni de noche, iendo personalmente adonde quiera que le parecía ser necesario'.[169] The Góngora manuscript also emphasises Arbizu's work as he ordered and organised the defence of the gates, walls and *husillos* by directing the placement of wooden boards and barriers. This account is less gushing about Arbizu's behaviour, but still praises his 'diligencia' when attempting to regulate meat and bread prices in the flooded city.[170]

There is clear continuity in the concerns of the *asistente* during flood across the century – protecting the walled city and controlling food supply in particular – and also in how their behaviour was reported on by sympathetic observers. They were portrayed as heroic, father-like exemplars for the rest of the city, who put their bodies at risk to defend Seville. There were other heroes in 1683-4 as well. The *arrendador* of the pontoon bridge, at this time Gregorio Núñez Salguero, was praised for his 'grande vigilancia y cuidado' in looking after the bridge during these months so that it did not disassemble – 'cosa que se juzgaba por mui dificultosa' – and in celebration of its endurance the city decorated the bridge with flags and pennants once the flood had passed.[171] A narrative of personal heroism and leadership was more relatable when reporting on flood, as opposed to the performance of the systems and structures that the city had in place.

The aftermath to the flooding of 1683-4 further exposed the lack of care given to the city's flood defences, as the council was unable to afford the necessary repair works. A report from the *maestro mayor*, Acisclo Burgueños, from 1685, showed that even one year later, the *husillos* were still in need of cleaning and restoration. Burgueños reported that the *husillos* at the Alameda, the Puerta de Carne, and the Puerta Real in particular were still clogged and unable to

[168] *Cathalago de assistentes*, p. 10.
[169] Loaisa, *Seca y lluvias*, fo. 198r.
[170] 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', fo. 271r.
[171] Ibid., fo. 270r.

drain water from the city. Unable to act without an injection of funding from the city authorities, the *maestro mayor* simply asked the council and *asistente* to advise him on how to act.[172] Their sluggishness in responding to these issues of infrastructure can be attributed to an inability to pay for the work, an issue which prompted letters to and from court. The immediate priority of the urban government in 1684 had been to communicate with the monarchy to explain the city's difficulties and seek concessions so that it might get back on its feet more quickly. In a letter to the king dated 29 February 1684, the city council reported on 'el infeliz estado' in which Seville found itself.[173] Because of the drought of 1683, the city had already been plunged into a food crisis, and obliged to spend excessive amounts of gold and silver in an attempt to source supplies, leaving it in a state of 'la miseria, que cada dia se va experimentando mas'. Already at the point of despair, the city council's letter describes how in the winter God saw fit to punish the city for its 'pecados' by sending a series of ten floods, some of which caused the river to swell to a greater height and width than had even been experienced in that 'lamentable' year of 1626. The reference back to that flood demonstrates the long-term impact on civic memory (and even on the memory of political institutions) of such disasters. No-one on the Seville city council at this time would have had any personal memories of that event from fifty-eight years before; yet the deadliness of the 1626 flood had entered social memory, becoming part of the historical fabric centred on places and spaces, and recorded in print. Describing official efforts to defend the city, the council unsurprisingly praised the actions of the king's royal representative, *asistente* Arbizu, who worked 'con el infatigable desuelo, y trabajo personal', and emphasised the importance of the system of *husillos* and the use of wooden panels to try and prevent surges of water entering the city. Regardless of these efforts, however, water had entered the city, both rainwater and water from below the ground in pipes that otherwise served the city's public fountains, and submerged the lower-lying districts. The letter describes the use of boats and the forming of specialised *diptutados* to respond to the radically altered conditions in the flooded city, and the range of issues that confronted the city once the flood had subsided – the desolation of buildings, the

[172] Acisclo Burgueños to city council, 1685, AMS IV.19.32, fo. 579r.
[173] City council to Charles II, 29 Feburary 1684, AMS XI (folio).1. 46, fo. 242r.

disrepair of the walls and *husillos*, and the extremely poor condition of the street paving, which necessitated a ban on carriages and wagons.[174]

The letter concluded with a supplication to the monarch to intervene and deliver the city some relief, in language that marks a clear shift from the belligerent tone the city council had taken on other occasions in the century, whether when dealing with the king himself, his representative the *asistente*, or other institutions within the city. This change of tone is revealing of a changed power dynamic between city and crown, as the former had declined at a far more alarming pace than the latter throughout the century, on account of population loss due to plague, over-taxation and environmental factors. The city council declared that they were putting this account 'a sus Reales Pies con la veneracion que acostumbra', and were asking him to attend to them 'con la clemencia de Padre universal' and do whatever he deemed right to relieve the 'continuadas fatigas' the city had suffered.[175] A further letter of the next month reiterated these urgent needs, but also elaborated on some of the measures already taken by the city and how they had been funded, seeking retrospective approval for the use of royal funds. The letter acknowledged that whilst the king had pressing need of money to pursue the war with France, among other objectives, the city had perhaps even greater need. One of the city council's proposals, for example, suggested that the *almojarifazgo* customs tax on the import of bullion from America might be redirected to repairing houses in the city damaged by flood.[176] The city council specified that they were sending a representative, one Alonso de Monsalve, to push their claims.[177] This letter does not mention the *asistente* at all, choosing instead to negotiate with the king directly through agents and representatives. Whilst it may be that Arbizu was petitioning Charles II in private correspondence that has not survived, we know from the appointment process for a new *asistente* in late 1685 that Arbizu was struggling with his health, and had

[174] Ibid., fo. 242v-244v.
[175] Ibid., fo. 244v.
[176] *Acuerdo, que hizo la Ciudad de Sevila, pidiendo algunos alivios a S.M. por las grandes necesidades, que se han padecido, y padecer con la esterilidad del años de 1683, y con las 10 Avenidas, y daños, que ha hecho el rio este años de 1684. Pasò en el oficio de Don Fernando Suarez de Urbina 24 de dicha ciudad en Marzo de 1684*, AMS XI (folio).1.47, fo. 245r-249r.
[177] Ibid., fo. 252r.

petitioned on numerous occasions before then to be relieved of his duties.[178] It might be that the city felt he was an ineffective champion of their interests, and when they did receive favourable news that the king was granting their requests, it came from their own representative, Alonso de Monsalve.[179] The decline in the position of the *asistente*, and the instabilities over appointments late in the reign of Charles II, had an impact on how the city council organised their response to flooding, whilst the decline of the city in a more general sense is apparent from the city's changing dynamic with a monarchy that was also weakening. Whilst in 1626 the city had been near the height of its influence and power, providing stern resistance to royal demands, by 1684 it had to beg piteously so that it could repair damaged buildings.

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Studying Seville's seventeenth-century floods provides a barometer for assessing continuity and change in the city across the century. Structures (political and physical), processes, and systems remained the same – or, more accurately, stagnated. Clear deficiencies went unaddressed, and long-term solutions were passed over in favour of short-term, *ad hoc* measures. There were valid reasons for some issues not being addressed, including technical and technological limitations, but on balance the continuity of flood management structures reflects the failed nature of the relationship between court and city, with the latter unable to achieve basic improvements, bled dry by the financial demands of the former. Whilst the urban elite were able to get through such crises with a minimum of long-term damage (and with their reputations perhaps burnished by glowing reports of charitable activity), the less fortunate and the urban space as a physical reality suffered enormously from wider failures. This is the real, quotidian reality of a process that has been unsatisfactorily defined as 'decline'.

[178] Consulta of 13 October 1685, AHN Consejos 13.656, Exp. 53.
[179] *Cartas del Sr. D. Alonso Tous de Monsalve, Madrid 6 de Junio de 1684, dando noticia á la Ciudad del favorable resultado obtenido en la esposicion que hizo á S.M. por causa de las avenidas*. AMS IV.5.65.

Conclusion

In December 2015, heavy rainfall from Storm Eva caused flooding to sweep across the north of England. Roads were blocked, bridges destroyed, communications severed.[1] In both Yorkshire and Lancashire, thousands of homes were evacuated and the army was called in to rescue stranded families. Central Leeds was one area affected by the flooding; one BBC television reporter described Kirkstall Road, in the west of the city, as being 'like a river – people gathering to look, they can't believe what they're seeing'.[2] In York, where the engorged River Ouse spilled out into surrounding medieval streets, residents were stunned at the speed and power of the water. One commented: 'we didn't think for one minute we were going to get absolutely wiped out. The water was unbelievable – it was coming in so fast. We got no help whatsoever'.[3] Bridges were made impassable. At Tadcaster in North Yorkshire, a bridge that had been standing since the eighteenth century collapsed, and between Linton and Collingham in West Yorkshire (where I finished writing this thesis), the bridge is still closed and under repair more than a year after the disaster occurred, having buckled under the increased weight of water in the River Wharfe.[4] The costs of the flooding across the United Kingdom were estimated at over five billion pounds when accounting for public costs and private losses.[5] The flood defence infrastructure in many areas had proved to be inadequate. In an echo of decisions faced by those at the city gates in early modern Seville, where the crush of water from inside the city might necessitate the opening of the *husillos*, in York on Boxing Day 2015 the Foss Barrier had to be opened to allow a surge of water through as the water levels threatened the inner mechanisms of the pumping station, a decision which was

[1] For a breakdown of the progression of the storms of December 2015, rainfall levels, and some information as to the geographical spread and extent of the damage, see 'December storms' trail of destruction', BBC News, accessed 2 March 2017, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35193682.
[2] 'Leeds flood video: Kirkstall Road "like a river – people can't believe what they're seeing"', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, accessed 2 March 2017, http://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/leeds-floods-video-kirkstall-road-like-a-river-people-can-t-believe-what-they-re-seeing-1-7644085.
[3] Juliet Stott, 'After the floods, York's residents try to piece their lives back together', *The Guardian*, accessed 2 March 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/money/2016/feb/06/after-york-floods-residents-piece-lives-back-together.
[4] For the repair of these bridges see http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/31765/Tadcaster---latest-updates and http://www.leeds.gov.uk/residents/Pages/Linton-Bridge.aspx.
[5] M. Taylor, S. Goodley and R. Syal, 'Cost of UK flood tops £5bn, with thousands facing financial ruin', *The Guardian*, accessed 2 March 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/28/uk-floods-costs-financial-ruin.

met with outcry from local residents whose homes were flooded with sewage as a result.[6] In the aftermath, then-Prime Minister David Cameron visited flood-hit areas, including York, and noted the 'unprecedented effect' caused by 'very serious flooding'.[7] Photo opportunities were taken with military personnel deployed in emergency relief. The Prime Minister donned wellies while visiting scenes hit by fluvial destruction, and the 'heroes' of the floods from the Environment Agency were invited to 10 Downing Street to be thanked for their actions in saving lives. The British government framed the narrative as one of endurance and heroism in the face of crisis.[8]

However, both in the immediate wake of the flooding and in the longer-term analysis, the British government faced severe criticism on a number of fronts: lack of public spending on flood defences, inadequate heed paid to flood warnings, and perpetuating a North-South spending gap that prioritised the latter at the former's expense.[9] A National Flood Resilience Review was commissioned in early 2016 to investigate issues surrounding flood infrastructure and investment strategies, the results of which were published in September following an announcement in that year's Budget that spending on flood defence would increase by seven hundred million.[10] The report tacitly acknowledged the neglect of local infrastructure in favour of core national infrastructure, and advocated the installation of what it admits would be 'ad hoc' temporary defences before longer-term solutions could be found.[11] Noting that the Met Office's climate predictions suggested an increasing risk of flash floods from greater rainfall, the government recommended a move towards 'natural' methods and an increased awareness of thinking

[6] See 'Foss Barrier and Pumping Station: Factual Report on Flooding on 26th December 2015', accessed 2 March 2017, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522633/Foss_Barrier_5_May_2016_FINAL.pdf.
[7] 'David Cameron Visits Flood-Hit Areas', Sky News, accessed 2 March 2017, http://news.sky.com/story/david-cameron-visits-flood-hit-areas-10334660.
[8] 'Flood heroes: Environment Agency staff invited to 10 Downing Street', Environment Agency, accessed 2 March 2017, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/flood-heroes-environment-agency-staff-invited-to-10-downing-street.
[9] See, for example, David Shukman, 'Floods unleash unprecedented criticism', BBC News, accessed 2 March 2017, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-35196046.
[10] 'National Flood Resilience Review', accessed 2 March 2017, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/551137/national-flood-resilience-review.pdf, p. 5.
[11] Ibid., pp. 15 and 18.

spatially.[12] The town of Pickering, in North Yorkshire, was cited as an exemplar: there, flooding in 2015 was avoided, seemingly thanks to the use of methods such as tree planting (to break the flow of floodwater) after a series of devastating floods in previous years.[13] Overall, the reports were still criticised by residents in those urban areas worst-hit by 2015's Storm Eva floods, Leeds and York, who criticised the government's 'Elastoplast' response for short-termism and for not specifically addressing flooding in those cities.[14] Meanwhile, other independent studies suggested that spending on flood defences favoured wealthier neighbourhoods and marginalised poorer ones.[15] In a changing global climate, the winter flooding in England in 2015 demonstrates that governments, even in ostensibly 'developed' nations, are struggling to develop strategies to manage new environmental and physical challenges, particularly at the local, urban level.

Throughout this thesis, I highlight the disconnects between the needs of the governed and the requirements of the Spanish monarchy between 1621 and 1700. I have pointed to instances of the inadequacy of local infrastructure and the occasional incompetence of local government. The response of the city of Seville to flooding, and the role of the *asistente* within that, was determined in large part by the wider political organisation and priorities of the realm, and by the spatial dynamics within one of the early modern world's most fascinating cities. It is the central contention of this thesis that historians need to do more to understand the political, cultural and social aspects of environmental crises (disasters) such as flooding. Humanity has never been the passive recipient of a reified 'nature'. Disasters like flooding are as much political and social events as they are environmental ones.

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[12] Ibid., p. 43 and 'Improving Resilience', Future Flood Prevention inquiry, published 2 November 2016, accessed 2 March 2017, https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmenvfru/115/11507.htm#_idTextAnchor033, 46.

[13] For a breakdown of measures in Pickering see Jeremy Walker, 'Slowing the Flow: Working with nature to reduce flood risk in North Yorkshire', *Creating a better place* blog post , accessed 2 March 2017, https://environmentagency.blog.gov.uk/2015/11/11/slowing-the-flow-working-with-nature-to-reduce-flood-risk-in-north-yorkshire/.

[14] David Behrens, 'York and Leeds sidelined as government takes "Elastoplast" to flood defences', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, accessed 2 March 2017, http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/environment/york-and-leeds-sidelined-as-government-takes-elastoplast-to-flood-defences-1-8111311.

[15] Alexandra Simms, 'Flood defence spending "favours wealthy families and those in the south east"', *The Independent*, accessed 2 March 2017, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/flood-defence-spending-favours-wealthy-families-and-those-in-the-south-east-a7377661.html.

In Seville's case, long-term improvements such as the construction of a stone bridge or the updating of a clearly inadequate system of flood defence built into the city's walls could not be implemented due to a combination of royal demands that drained the city of its financial wherewithal and arguments within the city over jurisdiction and liability. Divisions in Seville's social fabric between clergy and laity thwarted even basic repair works. I have focused on the figure of the *asistentes*, as they were connected to both the central and the local government, and the impact of the environment on early modern Spanish politics can thus be analysed through its effects on a single office holder. More work should be done on the intersection between politics and the environment, and for these issues to be connected to the grand, traditional narratives of early modern history. The environment and climate have hardly figured in histories of the decline of Spain, for example, even though such a perspective might offer fresh insights on that debate. In Seville, the increased number of floods in the seventeenth century certainly contributed to the general malaise in the city: they caused untold economic and human loss, promoted the spread of plague, and encouraged fatalistic, even apocalyptic interpretations of events.

The *asistentes* of Seville reflected the importance placed on the city of Seville by the monarchy. In comparison to the post of *corregidor* elsewhere in Castile, the *asistente* not only had enhanced powers, but the men appointed were of a higher social standing and were earmarked for their proven loyalty and service to the crown, destined for future roles in the central machinery of government at court or in the empire. That Seville was viewed as a city of unique importance is illustrated by the plans of Philip IV in 1625 and 1652 to reorganise the exercise of royal power there by creating a new *virrey* from the two positions of *asistente* and *regente* of the *Real Audiencia*. These proposals also highlighted one of the key problems faced by *asistentes*: jurisdictional conflict in the city, caused in part by a lack of jurisdictional clarity from the monarchy over the division of legal responsibilities between the *asistente*'s office and the *Real Audiencia*. The rejection of the proposals by both the *Real Cámara* and Seville's city council revealed an explicit hostility to 'novedades' in contemporary political culture – an aversion to change and reform at both the local and national level.

Jurisdictional problems also proved an unwelcome distraction to the pressing quotidian concerns of urban government. The *asistente*'s responsibility to manage the monarchy's financial and military demands further compromised the city's needs. The *asistentes* were able to see that local needs sometimes had to trump royal demands, a perspective encouraged by their reliance on local experts and craftspeople, such as the *maestro mayor*. Government in early modern Spain, even in one of Europe's most populous cities and one of the most important hubs of one of its strongest monarchies, was a decidedly local affair, and governors previously viewed as agents of 'absolutism' had to engage with the gritty realities of urban space. A wide group of people were depended on to make government work. Whilst the *asistentes* were the most powerful agent in the city, their interests still had to be balanced against those of the *Real Audiencia*, the cathedral chapter, and the nobles on the city council. These other power groups held the *asistentes* in check and limited what they could accomplish, even in seemingly vital issues such as the repairing of the city walls following flood.

Whilst Seville's unique importance did prompt attempts at unique solutions, it was not alone in either the challenges it faced or in the way it was governed. The ways in which it was an exceptional case – its importance, the severity and frequency of flooding – simply make the disconnect between the needs of local communities and the concerns of the monarchy more stark. In the light of my findings, I suggest that the debate over Spain's 'decline' should be reframed so as to emphasise environmental challenges faced in and by its constituent towns and cities. The impact of the environment and disaster on early modern cities has not been seriously studied. The evidence of Seville would seem to confirm Geoffrey Parker's analysis that a 'fatal synergy' between natural and human factors played a part in both crisis and failure. I hope this thesis will encourage more research on these themes, and plan in the future to undertake a comparative study of disasters such as flooding and earthquakes across the early modern Spanish empire. I also hope to encourage a greater willingness to connect local case-studies and the wider national narrative, as the history of the *asistente*, flooding, and Seville 1621-1700 demonstrates that the two are in close association in the early modern period.

How societies and cities cope with the environment and with disaster are important and topical concerns that will only become increasingly relevant. Although it is easy to portray early modern Seville's struggles in this regard as signs of a failing, dying monarchy and an aloof, incompetent local leadership led by a royal agent whose efforts were too few and spread too thinly, it is important to remember contemporary Britain still struggles with these issues. The environment remains, and will always remain, an issue of vital political relevance. This thesis may suggest ways by which we might increase the historical understanding of politics and the environment.

Appendices

Appendix 1): Men appointed *asistente* of Seville, 1621-1700

Name	**Dates *asistente***
Pedro de Deza, count of La Fuente del Sauco	1621-3
Fernando Ramírez Fariñas	1623-6
Lorenzo de Cárdenas, count of Puebla del Maestre	1626-9
Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, viscount of Corzana	1629-34
Garcia Sarmiento de Sotomayor, count of Salvatierra	1634-42
Diego de Cardenas, count of Puebla del Maestre	1642-4
Gaspar de la Cueva, marquis of Bedmar	1644-5
Alonso de Cardona, count of Eril	1645-7
Diego de Cárdenas, count of Puebla del Maestre	1647-51
Pedro de Zúñiga y Enríquez, marquis of Avilafuente	1651-2
Pedro Núñez de Guzman, count of Villaumbrosa	1653-62
Pedro Mesía de Tobar, count of Molina	1662-4
Josef de Figueroa	1665
Baltasar de Heraso y Toledo, count of Humanes	1666-9
Pedro de Villela, count of Lences	1669-73
Carlos de Herrera Ramirez de Arellano	1673-8
Manuel de Giron y Salcedo, marquis of Sofraga	1678-80
Fernando de Moscoso Osorio	1680-3
Luis de Salcedo y Arbizu	1683-5
Felix Nieto de Silva, count of Guaro	1685-7
Josef Solis Valderrabano, count of Montellano	1687-92
Pedro Núñez de Prado, count of Adanero	1692
Juan de Valenzuela Venegas, count of Valdeaguila	1693-5
Lorenzo Fernandez de Villavicencio, marquis of Valhermoso	1695-1704

Appendix 2): 1771 street plan of central Seville

Plano topográphico de la M. N. Y M. L. ciudad de Sevilla. Se levantó, y abrió por disposición del S.or D.n Pablo de Olavide, asistente de esta ciudad, intendente del exército, y provincia de Andalucía, y superintendente de las nuevas poblaciones de Sierra Morena, y Andalucía. Año de 1771, Real Academia de la Historia, accessed 10 April 2017, http://bibliotecadigital.rah.es/dgbrah/es/consulta/registro.cmd?id=12767.




EXPLICACION
DE ESTE MAPA.
PUERTAS DE LA CIUDAD.
1. Puerta de Xerez.
2. Postigo del Carbon.
3. Postigo del Aceyte.
4. Puerta del Arenal.
5. Puerta de Triana.
6. Puerta Real.
7. Puerta de San Juan.
8. Puerta de la Barqueta.
9. Puerta de la Macarena.
10. Puerta de Cordoba.
11. Puerta del Sol.
12. Puerta del Osario.
13. Puerta de Carmona.
14. Puerta de la Carne.
15. Puerta Nueva.
PARROQUIAS.
16. El Sagrario de la Santa Iglesia.
17. La Colegial de San Salvador.
18. Santa Maria Magdalena.
19. San Isidro.
20. San Pedro.
21. San Bartholomé.
22. San Lorenzo.
23. San Roman.
24. Santiago el Viejo.
25. San Andres.
26. San Nicolas.
27. Santa Marina.
28. San Marcos.
29. San Miguel.
30. San Esteban.
31. Omnium Sanctorum.
32. Santa Cathalina.
33. San Juan de la Palma.
34. San Martin.
35. San Julian.
36. San Gil.
37. San Ildefonso.
38. San Vicente.
39. Santa Lucia.
40. San Juan de Acre de la Encomienda de San Juan, y está esenta con todo su distrito de la Jurisdiccion Arzobispal.
AYUDAS DE PARROQUIAS.
41. Santa Cruz.
42. Santa Maria la Blanca.
43. San Roque.
COMUNIDADES.
44. San Basilio.
45. S. Pablo, Orden de Predicadores.
46. Santo Thomas, Colegio Mayor de dicha Orden.
47. Regina Angelorum, dicha Orden.
48. Monte-Sion, dicha Orden.
49. San Francisco.
50. San Buenaventura, Colegio Mayor, dicha Orden.
51. San Antonio, dicha Orden.
52. San Diego, dicha Orden.
53. El Valle, dicha Orden.
54. San Pedro de Alcántara, dicha Orden.
55. Los Capuchinos, dicha Orden.
56. Los Terceros, dicha Orden.
57. El Carmen.
58. San Alberto, Colegio de dicha Orden.
59. Los Remedios, Descalzos, dicha Orden.
60. El Santo Angel, dicha Orden.
61. San Agustin.
62. San Acasio, Colegio de dicha Orden.
63. El Pópulo, Descalzos, dicha Orden.
64. La Santisima Trinidad, Calzados.
65. Dicha, Descalzos.
66. Nuestra Señora de la Merced.
67. San Laureano, Colegio de dicha Orden.
68. San Joseph, Descalzos de dicha Orden.
69. Colegio de S. Francisco de Paula.
70. Casa Profesa de la Compañia de Jesus.
71. San Hermenegildo, Colegio de dicha Orden.
72. Noviciado de San Luis, dicha Orden.
73. Las Becas, dicha Orden.
74. Los Ingleses, dicha Orden.
75. Los Irlandeses, dicha Orden.
76. Casa de Misioneros de Indias, dicha Orden.
77. Casa de Clérigos Regulares Menores.
78. Santiago de la Espada.
79. San Benito de Calatrava.
80. San Antonio Abad.
81. Oratorio de San Felipe Neri, Presbyteros.
82. San Juan de Dios.
CONVENTOS DE MONJAS.
83. San Clemente el Real, Orden del Cister.
84. Las Dueñas, idem.
85. Madre de Dios, Dominicas.
86. Santa Maria de Pasion, idem.
87. Santa Maria de Gracia, idem.
88. Santa Maria la Real, idem.
89. Santa Maria de los Reyes, Descalzas, idem.
90. Santa Clara, Regla de dicha Santa.
91. Santa Ines, idem.
92. Santa Maria de Jesus, idem.
93. Belen, Carmelitas Calzadas.
94. Señora Santa Ana, idem.
95. Santa Teresa, idem Descalzas.
96. San Leandro, Regla de San Agustin.
97. El Espiritu Santo, idem.
98. Santa Maria de la Paz, idem.
99. La Encarnacion, idem.
100. El Dulce Nombre de Jesus, idem.
101. La Concepcion, junto á San Juan, Franciscanas.
102. La Concepcion, junto á San Miguel, idem.
103. Santa Maria del Socorro, idem.
104. Las Virgenes, idem.
105. La Asuncion, Mercenarias Calzadas.
106. San Joseph, idem Descalzas.
107. Minimas de San Francisco de Paula.
108. Santa Isabel, Orden de San Juan de Jerusalen.
109. Santa Paula, Gerónymas.
110. Santa Rosalia, Capuchinas.
PRADO DE SANT
R Y O G U A
PLANO TOPOGRAPHICO
de la
M N Y M L CIUDAD
de Sevilla.


BEATERIOS.
111. Beatas Dominicas.
112. Beatas Carmelitas.
113. Beatas Trinitarias.
114. Beatas Franciscanas.
HERMITAS
DONDE SE CELEBRA.
115. Hermita de San Joseph.
116. Dicha de San Andres.
117. Hermita de nuestra Señora del Mayor Dolor.
118. Hermita del Señor San Blas.
119. Hermita de San Hermenegildo.
120. Dicha de nuestra Señora de la Estrella.
121. Dicha de nuestra Señora de la Concepcion.
122. Dicha de nuestra Señora del Rosario.
123. Dicha del Santisimo Christo de las Tres Necesidades.
124. Dicha de nuestra Señora de la Piedad.
125. Dicha de la Santisima Cruz del Roden, nuestra Señora del Carmen.
126. Dicha de nuestra Señora de los Dolores, de los Terceros Siervos de Maria.
COLEGIOS, Y SEMINARIOS.
127. Colegio Mayor, y Universidad de Santa Maria de Jesus.
128. Seminario de San Isidoro.
129. Dicho Real de San Telmo.
130. Dicho de Niñas Huerfanas.
131. Dicho de Niñas de la Doctrina.
132. Colegio Seminario de doce Niñas Nobles.
HOSPITALES DE CURACION.
133. Hospital del Amor de Dios.
134. Dicho del Espiritu Santo.
135. Hospital de San Cosme, y San Damian.
136. Dicho del Buen-Suceso.
137. Dicho de Terceros Franciscanos.
138. Hospital del Rey para invalidos.
HOSPITALES DE CASAS
DE MISERICORDIA.
139. Hospital de la Caridad.
140. Dicho de los Inocentes.
141. Dicho de los Venerables Sacerdotes.
142. Dicho de San Bernardo.
143. Dicho de San Nicolas de Bari.
144. Hospital de Santa Marta.
145. Casa de Niñas Espositas.
146. Hospital de la Misericordia.
EDIFICIOS,
Y COSAS PARTICULARES.
147. La Santa Metropolitana y Patriarcal Iglesia.
148. Palacio Arzobispal.
149. Sala de Rentas del Ilustrisimo Cabildo.
150. Real Alcazar.
151. Casa de la Contratacion.
152. Real Lonja.
153. Real Casa de la Moneda.
154. Real Aduana.
155. Almacen de Lanas.
156. La Maestranza Real de Artilleria.
157. La Real Fabrica del Tabaco.
158. Fabrica Real del Salitre.
159. Real Almacen del Rey para la Madera de Segura.
160. La Santa Inquisicion, y Castillo de Triana.
161. Casas Capitulares de la Ciudad.
162. La Real Audiencia.
163. La Carcel Real.
164. Casa del Colisèo.
165. Real Alhondiga, y Pósito del Monte de Piedad.
166. Casa de Pilatos hecha à imitacion de la misma donde azotaron à nuestro Señor.
167. Peso de la Harina.
168. Plaza de los Toros.
169. La Alameda con sus Fuentes, y Arboledas.
170. Los Hèrcules de dicha Alameda.
171. Las Leonas modernamente puestas.
172. La Torre del Oro.
173. Muelle de la Aduana.
174. Muelle para desembarcar materiales.
175. El Quemadero.
176. El Puente de Triana.
177. El Matadero.
178. El Rastro.
179. Conducto por donde viene el agua à la Ciudad llamado los Caños de Carmona.
180. La Alcantarilla de las Madejas.
181. Dicha de San Bernardo.
182. Dicha del Ganado.
183. Alcantarilla nueva.
PLAZAS, Y CALLES,
que por su pequeñez no se pudieron nominar en el Plano.
184. Plaza de Rasca-viejas.
185. Plaza de Pumarejo.
186. Plaza de la Alondiga.
187. Plaza de los Descalzos.
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191. Plaza de la Curiceria de los Abades.
192. Plaza del Pozo Santo.
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195. Plaza de la Botica de las aguas.
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197. Plaza de los Venerables.
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199. Plaza del Espiritu Santo.
200. Plaza del Señor San Joseph.
201. Plaza de San Esteban.
202. Plaza de San Nicolas.
203. Plaza de los Leones.
204. Palenque de la Feria.
205. Cruz de la Cerrajeria.
206. Plaza de San Antonio.
207. Callejon de San Buenaventura.
208. Calle del Atabul.
209. Calle de los Caballos.
210. Plaza de la Curiceria del Real Alcazar.
211. Plaza de Santiago.
SE LEVANTÒ, Y ABRIÒ POR DISPOSICION DEL Sr. D. PABLO DE OLAVIDE, ASISTENTE DE ESTA CIUDAD, INTENDENTE DEL EXERCITO, Y PROVINCIA DE ANDALUCIA, Y SUPERINTENDENTE DE LAS NUEVAS POBLACIONES DE SIERRA-MORENA, Y ANDALUCIA. AÑO DE 1771.
Escala de 600 Varas Castellanas
PARTE DE TRIANA
RIO GUALQUIVIR

Appendix 3): Sonnets circulating against *asistente* Fernando Ramírez Fariñas after the 1626 flood

Transcribed from 'Avenidas del Río Guadalquivir', *Memorias eclésiasticas y seculares de la muy noble y muy leal ciudad de Sevilla* (1696), BCC 59-1-03, fo. 263r-v.

Soneto

Como Betis soberbio assi violaste
las leyes de tu margen. como ossado
la ciudad mas insigne as inundado
que a tus locos cristales haze engaste?
Acaso mi Asistencia aqui ignoraste?
No tal: antes de largo iba enfadado,
Y abierta vi la puerta, y e me entrado,
Y no e buelto a salir porque cerraste.
Dejanos; baste ya lo sucedido;
Buelbete a yr: que la palabramia
Hacerte dar un Habito promete.
Yo Rio soy de fama, y conocido,
No e menester Habito: Vueseoria
Podra hazerle merced a Tagarete.

Responde Tagarete.

Seor Guadalquivir, yo que pecados
Tengo contra mi Patria cometidos?
Los que en Seuilla fueron destruidos,
Fueron por mis descuidos anegados?
Quantos templos por mi son profunados?
O errores contra Dios introducidos?
Que Heregia admitieron mis oidos?
O por mi causa quantos son casados?
Habito ami! Ay casomas estraño!
Aunque fueran tan grandes mis delitos
Nunca esperê rigo tan inclemente..
Otro a sido el Autor de tantos daños;
Y pues son sus errores infinitos,
Denselo por Justicia al Asistente.

Otro.

Seor Guadalquivir, pese a su brio,
es caganchas, o esgueba, Tagarete?
Que el habito que el otro le promete
quiere, que sin ser gato, diga Mio?
Aunque pobre naci, tambien me engrio,
Y encrespê la melena del copete
Piennsa que por ser charco tan pobrete
He de aceptar lo que desecha un Rio?
Habito ami, sin conceder Millones!
Sin vender los lugares de Seuilla,
Por un poco de grana de Olivares?
Sin presentar seruicios, ni doblones?
Sin hazer seis viajes a Castilla

siendo tan conocidos mis solares?
Deselo a Manzanares
o a Tormes, destsruccion de Salamanca,
vino sin calidad, otro sin blanca.

Otro soneto al Asistente D. Fernando Ramírez Fariñas

Un clerigo ahorque, y glorieme dello,
Lleno de cuernos afrente a un Buey manso,
A un pobrete azote por un garbanzo,
Y a salinas saque sobre un camello.
Una muger con el cuchillo al cuello
Al marido quitê del cadahalso;
El Donatibo para el Rey alcanzo,
Y Millones con solo proponello.
Azote un Justo Abel: prendi un Teatino,
Y al Conde mi Señor di dos Lugares,
Y al Rio, por un mes meti en Seuilla..
Por Gobierno tan bueno, y peregrino,
Pienso, si Dios me guarda al de Olivares,
subir a Presidente de Castilla.
Que es Justo que esta silla
De su exelencia, por su buen gobierno,
Aun hombre que por el se va al Infierno.

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