

MAYORDOMÍA: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

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Following the conquest of Mexico and Guatemala, the Indian communities of those areas were purposefully reorganized around Spanish institutions of Church and State. Although these institutions were intended to integrate individual towns and villages at a national level, as they did in Spain, that level of integration did not persist for long. Spanish religious orders were ultimately withdrawn from direct supervision of native life, and Indian communities sank to a folk-society level of organization wherein they were left to their own devices, remained socially homogeneous, and continued to be patterned around kinship relations. With the gradual development of centers of Spanish and mestizo culture and their encroachment upon native areas, communities have been progressively and variably drawn from the Indian sphere by acculturation so that community studies of those areas today are able to document towns in various states of change on the Indian-Mestizo continuum.

The Spanish religious institution of mayordomía, the stewardship of the saints, was among those introduced by the Spanish clergy. Essentially it involves the assumption of the responsibility of caring for one of the sacred images in the church for one year or more and organizing and financing the annual fiesta of that image. It is the thesis of this study that the persistence of the institution of mayordomía on the Spanish-Indian-Mestizo continuum has been effected by progressive adaptation to new maintenance systems wherein structural adjustment of the institution itself has occurred. We shall proceed by an examination of mayordomía in its Spanish, Indian folk-community, and mestizo contexts with the intent of noting basic principles of organization and change.

Mayordomía in Spain

In Spain, mayordomía has traditionally been a function of cofradías, or brotherhoods, and a history of the latter is to a large extent a history of the former. Gillen has called attention to the possible influence of Islam in furthering the development of cofradías in Spain. Moslem laymen's clubs, which continue to be widespread in the Islamic world today, were encouraged during the Moslem occupation of Spain as mechanisms for furthering Islam (Gillin 1951:86-87). Although Islamic institutions may have influenced the development of Christian cofradías, it seems more likely that the Spanish cofradía is more directly derived from the religious brotherhoods and trade guilds of western Europe. These occurred in Germany, France, Holland, and England as early as the ninth century, but not until the twelfth century did they occur in developed form in Spain (Foster 1953:10-11), when the north of the peninsula was already free of Moslem domination.

The history of the cofradía movement in Spain has been summarized by Foster (1953:11-17), and the following data on the pre-contemporary period is from his paper except where otherwise indicated. The earliest form was the

cofradía religiosa-benéfica, composed of voluntary devotees of a particular saint, which offered mutual aid and guaranteed spiritual welfare to departed members in the form of masses and Christian burial. Membership was by acceptance of the other members. With this type of organization as a base there developed the cofradía gremial, which functioned similarly except that the members were restricted to workers in a particular trade. The cofradía gremial later became a cofradía-gremio when the tradesmen members began to use it as a medium for effecting and enforcing regulation of their trade. Ultimately, the cofradía-gremio became two bodies, a gremio, or trade guild, and a religious cofradía sponsored by that guild.

All cofradías and gremios were chartered by Church, royal, or municipal authority depending on whether the religious or the trade aspect was emphasized. The ordenanzas, or charter constitutions, specified the officers of the organizations and the rights and obligations of the members. The names of the officers given by Foster are of particular interest for the fact that some of them are later duplicated in New World organizations. Offices noted are those of prioste, alcalde, mayordomo, scribe, deputy, preboste, prohombre, mayoral, procurador, administrador, and prior. The Cofradía de San Eloy, of Córdoba, was governed by a prioste, two alcaldes, a mayordomo, a scribe, and two deputies, each of whom was elected annually. A general chapter meeting, called the cabildo, was held each year, sometimes on the day of the patron saint's fiesta, as well as other less important meetings at less auspicious times.

Spiritual welfare to departed members was early extended to include aid by the cofradía in time of illness, economic aid to widows of members, loans to members from returns on communal property, legal aid, dowries for orphaned daughters of members, and old age provisions. Hospitals were even built to care for sick members and their families.

The patron saint of the cofradía was materialized in an image owned by the group and housed on an altar in space provided by arrangement with a local parish church or convent. At the time of the saint's annual fiesta, the saint and image were feted by the group. A feast was a usual part of these fiestas, and operational expenses for the fiesta as well as throughout the year were met by periodic assessments and fines levied against members.

In the fifteenth century the term hermandad, or brotherhood, became popular for these cofradías, a use which has continued to the present. Cofradías developing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries fell into new or revised types. These are the cofradía sacramental, organized solely for homage to a patron, with no mutual aid; cofradía religiosa-benéfica, the old religious mutual aid society with rigid, closely defined services. Women's cofradías also developed, as exemplified by the formal associations of women in Old Castile which celebrated the fiesta of Santa Agueda, the patroness of women (Foster 1960:182).

Today the hermandades of Spain provide the individual an opportunity to reaffirm his faith through collective sponsorship of religious fiestas or of the images which are part of fiestas. - Their organization at the present reveals some of the structure of the past. An hermano mayor, who is elected

normally for a fixed period, but sometimes serving for life, is usually at the head of the brotherhood; the remaining members are called hermanos (Foster 1960:163-4).

The Hermanad de San Benito of Cerro de Andévalo in Huelva is governed by a board of twelve hermanos mayores who elect their successors, usually sons of their own deceased. Other officials, including prioste, secretario, and depositario, are elected from among the hermanos mayores every two years. The former post of alcalde has been dropped, although other hermandades in the town have retained the position. Membership as an hermano menor, or younger brother, is open to any man in town on payment of an annual dues. For the annual saint's fiesta a mayordomo is appointed each year. He may be one of the hermanos mayores, but any man in town may volunteer for this cargo by asking the town mayor, who passes the request on to the priest, who in turn advises the hermanos mayores. If named, the mayordomo must assume the financial burden of covering the expenses of a feast for the hermandad and its guests and paying for the mass in honor of the saint. Sometimes the cargo, or burden, of the mayordomo is shared simultaneously by several men. Considerable honor attaches to service as a mayordomo and a successful man is expected to "validate his position by serving at least once" (Foster 1960:164). Although it is not specified, one might hazard the guess that San Benito, the patron of this hermandad, is also the patron of the town, which would account for the circuitous route through the mayor of a prospective mayordomo's request.

The fiesta of Jesús Nazareno, patron of the village of Belinchón in Cuenca, is not sponsored by an hermandad or any other sodality. Instead, three mayordomos, a secretary, and a treasurer are elected at an open town meeting. Their service is for three years, and there are no other members. The term mayordomía is used to refer to the group, or to their service, rather than hermandad or cofradía (Foster 1960:164).

Several significant principles are apparent in these descriptions of Spanish sodalities, past and present. The most important of these bear directly on the distinction of mayordomía itself. It becomes clear that a mayordomía is not a cofradía, that mayordomía is a separate institution which may or may not be a function of a cofradía, or brotherhood. A mayordomo, in the original sense of the word, was the steward of a gentleman, and in its religious usage reflects this meaning in that the office implies being the steward of a saint and accepting the cargo, or burden, of that saint's fiesta. Within or without the structure of the cofradía, mayordomía is a rotating function. Furthermore, mayordomía may be the function of a set of officers who may have specialized tasks and whose organizational structure in no way conforms to the tradition for brotherhoods. The officers of a mayordomía are usually led by a mayordomo or mayordomos, and if a brotherhood is the agency for a mayordomía, then the directing officers of that brotherhood, the hermanos mayores, may be considered as the officers of the mayordomía, with one of their members serving in the rotating post of mayordomo. Thus, mayordomía in Spain has been or is the function of a rotating group of officers who may or may not be the agents of a cofradía, or brotherhood. They may in fact be agents of any group which professes to have a patron saint, such as towns and parishes.

By contrast, a cofradía or hermandad is a permanent, voluntary organization, claiming a patron saint, administered by a group of high officers, with

membership generally open to all acceptable to those officers. Mutual welfare and sociality have been as much or more a part of their function as religious activities. Furthermore, women's associations have not been excluded from this type of organization.

Introduction of Mayordomía to New Spain

There is no question that following the conquest of Mexico and Guatemala mayordomía was introduced to those areas in the traditional Spanish contexts of trade association and mutual aid. Ordenanzas, which legalized their existence and specified their organization and operations, have survived to indicate their exact duplication of the Spanish sodalities of the day. The Cofradía of St. Eloy, a gremial brotherhood of silver workers, received its charter in Mexico City in 1537 (Foster 1953:17-18). Cofradías with a gremial context were not especially common in Indian areas, possibly due to the fact that Spanish adherence to European proprietorship of the trades excluded or restricted Indians from these areas of activity (Foster 1953:22). However, they appear to have had a reasonably successful development and survival in the Tarascan area. At Cherán merchants and musicians each own a saint's image, and the honey gatherers own two. The mayordomías which serve these saints are transmitted only in the respective trades (Beals 1946:139-42). Quiroga still retains gremios of the bakers, foremen, and shoemakers (Brand 1951:204).

Motolinía, referring to the period about 1540, declared Mexico City to have "many excellent confraternities which honor and celebrate the principal feasts, console and relieve many poor sick people, and give honorable burial to the dead" (Motolinía 1950:204). Today, past officers of mayordomías in Tzintzuntzan, Michoacán, receive the privilege, on death, of lying in state in the Church free of the fees which must be paid for others (Foster 1948:195). In some Guatemalan communities officers of cofradías are charged with the responsibility of burying anyone who dies in the pueblo. The lending of money, a well documented function of Spanish brotherhoods, has also been noted for cofradías in various places in Mexico and Guatemala (Foster 1953:19).

In central Mexico prior to 1540 the religious orders fostered a number of brotherhoods which operated hospitals for the Indians. The Hospital of the Incarnation was established in Tlaxcala in 1537 and was operated by a brotherhood "dedicated to serving and burying the poor and celebrating the feasts," (Motolinía 1950:155). In the Tarascan area Don Vasco de Quiroga founded a great number of these hospitals modeled after his earlier success, the Hospital de Santa Fe in Mexico City (Basauri 1940:528-9). At Tzintzuntzan the hospital was in the charge of the Cargueros de la Kenguería, a group of officers whose patron was the image of the Immaculate Conception. Not only did the hospital administer to the well-being of the populace, but it also provided a focus for the activities of other mayordomía groups concerned with Church festivals (Foster 1948:201-2).

However important cofradías of the gremial and mutual aid varieties became in centers of Spanish and mestizo population, generally speaking they do not appear to have developed to any great extent in Indian communities. The only well documented exceptions are the Tarascan area and the Guatemalan highlands, and here they are muted by other organizational principles. This absence is

to be expected when we consider that the institutions of the Church were mediated to Indian communities primarily by the religious orders. As a means of propagating the faith these orders encouraged among the Indians the *cofradía sacramental*, a *cofradía* dedicated to purely religious ends (Foster 1953:18). This type of *cofradía*, as we have previously noted, was developing in Spain during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, undoubtedly encouraged by the Church as instruments of the Counter Reformation (Gillin 1951:86-7).

The form of the *cofradía sacramental* was ideally suited to the needs of the priests, who were more interested in assuring the regular perpetuation of the major festivals of the Church calendar than in a random proliferation of cults of individual saints. Conceptually the celebrations that they established fell into two categories. On one hand were the Church holidays, such as those of Lent and Holy Week; on the other were the fiestas of the patron saints of the community and its wards. The annual celebrations of each category were assured by individual sets of *mayordomía* officers. The *mayordomías* of the Church festivals were sometimes facilitated by associating them with the cult of an appropriate image. Thus, images of the Santo Entierro, or Deceased Christ, were formerly feted at Holy Week in Tzintzuntzan (Foster 1948:199) and Tepoztlán (Redfield 1930:115). However, *mayordomía* was also divorced from images and applied to the support of pageants or fiestas alone. For example, the *Alférez Pasión* organization at Chamula, Chiapas, is responsible for organizing the whole festival of Carnival (Pozas 1959:168).

The priests, in their capacity as master planners of community religious life, organized the Indian towns along the lines of the Spanish parish, a structure which was validated by the rules laid down for the reduction and reorganization of Indian settlements in the Laws of Burgos of 1512 (Simpson 1934:32). *Mayordomía* when applied to this structure fell into two levels of integration. On the community level were the *mayordomías* of the Church festivals and the village patron saint; on the barrio, or ward, level were the *mayordomías* of the patrons of those barrios. We shall further examine the adaptation of this plan to the Indian situation.

Adaptation of *Mayordomía* to New Spain

It is clear that the *pueblo-barrio* system of patron saints is a basic and ancient framework on which the *mayordomías* of Indian communities are distributed. There are numerous towns throughout Middle America today in which it continues to be an active, functioning system. For towns where barrios, or parishes, no longer function ceremonially, it is commonplace to find that their former existence and activity in this realm is documented.

There is no doubt that indigenous territorial divisions of towns were used at least in some cases as the basis for parish barrios. Motolinía states that following the conquest of Tenochtitlán, religious services for each capulli, or native ward, were held in the old public buildings of those wards until such time as churches could be built (Motolinía 1950:125). In many cases, however, the barrio system was a deliberate construct as part of the Spanish masterplan for Indian communities outlined in the Laws of Burgos.

The Laws of Burgos of 1512, the first comprehensive attempt to regulate Spanish-Indian relations, provided a plan for the resettlement, or reduction, of Indians in villages organized along Spanish lines (Simpson 1934:1). The code failed to be applied systematically, however, until the Count of Monterrey activated it in 1598, and a program of congregation of the Indians continued under him and his successor, the Marquis of Montesclaros, until at least 1605. These congregations appear to have extended over all of New Spain south of Tampico and Guadalajara. Missionizing under the religious orders, however, long preceded this reduction and their influence in Indian life was well established (Simpson 1934:32-39).

The policy of these laws was ultimately codified in the Recopilación de leyes de los reynos de las Indias of Madrid, 1756. The preamble of the Recopilación, essentially the same as when the Count of Monterrey undertook the congregation of 1599, provided the parish plan. Each congregation was to have a church, and civil and Church officers were specified (Simpson 1934:45-46). The commission of Pedro de Cervantes to undertake the actual congregation of the Province of Tlanchinol in Hidalgo, 1604-05, specifies that in the new town he should "put in one place the villages and estancias that are brought in, accommodating them on one street, one village in one part and another in another" (Simpson 1934:97). This he did for a number of villages which he established, and furthermore he called the divisions *barrios* and named them after the original towns from which they were composed. The commission then specified that the churches in the abandoned villages be destroyed (Simpson 1934:104-125).

It is clear that in reduction of this sort the ceremonial functions of each of the original towns making up the congregation would likely be perpetuated in their new surroundings. *Mayordomías* of the patron saints of small towns would become *mayordomías* of barrio patrons. That these towns had *mayordomías* prior to reduction is almost assured in each case where they possessed churches. It is also reasonable that any relationship distinctions possessed by the component towns independently would be continued in the composite community, and *barrios* could thus have become based upon kinship groupings.

Much has been said concerning the present and former occurrence of unilinear kinship groups in Middle America. Nonlocalized, patrilineal, exogamous clans exist today among the Cora (Nutini 1961:67), the Tzeltal villages of Cancuc and Oxchuc (Guiteras Holmes 1952a:103), and until recently among the Lacandones (Tozzer 1907:39-45). In the Tlaxcalan Nahuatl village of San Bernardino Contla, Nutini has identified a working system of semilocalized, patrilineal, exogamous clans, subdivided into lineages (Nutini 1961:67-72). Nonlocalized, patrilineal, exogamous lineages are active in the Tzotzil communities of San Pablo Chalchihuitan (Guiteras Holmes 1951:199-205) and Chamula (Pozas 1959:33-44).

There is little evidence that the kin groups of the Tzeltal and Tzotzil were formerly ceremonial units. The dispersed nature of their clans and lineages today appears to have reasonable antiquity, and in fact nonlocalized clans have been identified for the pre-conquest Maya of nearby highland Guatemala (Nutini 1961:64). The *barrios* and *calpules* of the Tzeltal must be distinguished from the structures of the same name of the Tzotzil; the former are nonlocalized, exogamous clans, the latter are roughly endogamous territorial

units composed of nonlocalized exogamous lineages. This structural completeness of the Tzotzil barrio with its component lineages and endogamy has led one author to view the Tzotzil pueblo of Chamula as a confederation of autonomous pueblos, each barrio possessing within itself all the political functions which would permit it to operate as a village (Pozas 1959:35). The *mayordomía* structure of the village, as we shall see later, certainly evidences this concept.

Whether Spanish barrios were or were not deliberately based upon kinship groups, it does appear that the villages chosen for incorporation into congregations because of their small size would have been composed of close kin. Beals has noted for the Mixe area that early writers affirm that small Mixe settlements were always composed of related families, and therefore were exogamic (Beals 1945:33). This situation probably obtained in a large part of Middle America.

Cofradías which centered on the patron saints of small towns, on those of barrios which formerly were small towns, or on the patrons of barrios created on existing native wards were likely, in a very real sense, to be drawing their membership from pre-existing relationship groups. The friars of the lay orders, imbued as they were with the concept of the brotherhood of man, certainly would not have objected to such an extension of *cofradía* membership. If kinship unity were not a basic element in barrio organization, the homogeneity of the relatively classless small towns, as well as the ultimate reduction of the class structure of more urban Indian towns to a homogeneous folk society level (Carrasco 1961:493), would have led to a lack of support for and ultimate readjustment of any sodality initiated on the basis of factional membership. Indeed, the fact that in most of Indian Mexico it is the term *mayordomía* and not *cofradía* which is used, and the fact that the formal organization of *mayordomía* consists only of officers, would seem to indicate that true *cofradías* were rarely successfully introduced into Indian areas and that the concept of a brotherhood was extended to all who by residence or kinship fell under the protection of the particular patron. In those areas where the term *cofradía* is used, the Tarascan area and the Guatemala highlands, it is applied only to the officers of a *mayordomía*; no true *cofradías* in fact exist today. This, it is suggested, indicates an adjustment to a homogeneous society. Throughout Middle America today virtually any adult male, provided he can afford the expense, can become a *mayordomía* officer. Election by the general populace or appointment by concensus has been reported from Tzintzuntzan, in the Tarascan area (Foster 1948:195); and Contla, Tlaxcala (Nutini 1961:73), and Tecospa, Mexico for the Nahuatl area (Madsen 1957:169). The custom of appointment by the representatives of the people, the elders and principal men, is very widespread.

In this connection, Foster has previously suggested that the Spanish institution of *cofradía* did not thrive in the New World due to the success of the competing Spanish institution of *compadrazgo*, or coparenthood. Both offered mutual aid, but *compadrazgo* functioned similarly to the pre-existing kinship ties of the people, and formalized brotherhoods as agents of these services were nonfunctional (Foster 1953:17-26). In the case of *mayordomía* similar reasoning appears adequate. When *mayordomías* were imposed on kin-based or otherwise homogeneous societies, organized *cofradías* or brotherhoods

were not needed to serve as agents for those *mayordomías*. The brotherhood was implicit in the organization of the society itself. Thus, *mayordomía* came to persist in New Spain.

Mayordomía and Barrio Autonomy

When barrios occur as components of larger communities, their participation in community level *mayordomías*, such as those of Church festivals and community patrons, follows principles which establish their autonomy as basic ceremonial units. Essentially these principles involve equal participation of the barrios in pueblo level functions. The Tzotzil community of Chamula in the Chiapas highlands, as described by Pozas (1959), exhibits these principles very adequately.

Chamula is divided, within the town, into three barrios, San Juan, San Pedro, and San Sebastian. The latter is being assimilated by San Pedro, and the two sometimes act as a single ceremonial unit. Only San Juan possesses a church, which is used by all three, but it is felt that a barrio should have a church and indeed San Sebastian once did. The saints' images in the Church of San Juan are treated by each barrio independently as if they were their own. Thus the *mayordomías* of the barrio of San Juan are duplicated by the barrio of San Pedro; each have one *mayordomía* of San Juan, two of San Sebastian, two of San Miguel, one of San Manuel, and apparently others similarly divided. Each of these barrio level *mayordomías* is performed by a ranked series of officers with specialized tasks, headed by a *mayordomo*. Some of the saints which these *mayordomías* serve also rate village-wide fiestas, the execution of which is not the responsibility of the barrio *mayordomías*. For each of these village fiestas there exists a chief officer, called the alférez, who heads a group of specialists. There are five of these alférez posts in the village, and they rotate barrio to barrio on a fixed circuit, each barrio responsible for its own selection of officers when its turn comes. For Church festivals associated with Carnival and Holy Week, each barrio independently appoints an Alférez Pasión and two Alférez Ojobs. Each of these officers heads a group of specialists from his own barrio and cooperates to some extent with his counterparts in the other barrios, but no village-wide representative group is formed (Pozas 1959:160-187).

It is obvious that at Chamula the barrios are ceremonially autonomous. Two principles of pueblo level action are evident, neither of which disrupts the autonomy of the barrio. One of these is the principle of contemporaneous, cooperating teams of officers, each team representing its own barrio. The other is the principle of rotating pueblo level offices among the barrios so that through time barrio obligation is equalized. At the barrio level there are no *mayordomía* groups involving an equality of officers; all officers of any one team are ranked specialists with a leader or chief officer.

Variations on the contemporaneous, equal representation theme are to be found in other villages. In the Chinotec pueblo of Ojitlán the fiesta of the patron saint is under the charge of five *mayordomos*, each one elected by and representing one of the five barrios. These five are assisted by ten to fifteen candidates, presumably also representing all of the barrios (Weitlaner 1951:445-46). In the Municipio of Tepoztlán, Morelos, in the Nahuatl area,

there are fourteen *mayordomías* of barrio patron saints, including those of the seven barrios of Tepoztlán itself and those of seven outlying pueblitos which are classed as barrios. The *mayordomos* of these barrio saints not only individually serve those saints, but for pueblo-wide Church festivals such as Carnival and Christmas they form a corp of equal functionaries, each with his own personal assistants, who work together to further the festivals. The fiesta of the patron saint of the municipio, strangely, is the property of one barrio of the pueblo, and its *mayordomía* is always filled by men from that barrio; equal financial assistance, however, is given by all the barrios (Redfield 1930:69-119).

The principle of revolving the responsibility of cargos among the barrios is also present at Tepoztlán. On occasions of major fiestas in the outlying small pueblos, especially that of Ixcatepec, the *mayordomos* of all the barrio patrons in the municipio rotate the costs of the eight day fiesta so that any one or a pair are responsible for a particular day of the celebration (Redfield 1930:65). By the revolving principle, each of the ten barrios of the Nahuatl pueblo of San Bernadino Contla, Tlaxcala is charged with the *mayordomías* of the four pueblo-owned images only once every ten years. A single team of ranked officers is elected by the barrio at this time to handle all the *mayordomías*. The three largest barrios carry the principle even further and divide themselves into halves, each of which has the responsibility of the pueblo cargos only once every twenty years (Nutini 1961:72-73).

Authority and Support

A characteristic feature of the Indian folk societies of Middle America is the civil-religious hierarchy. It involves the graded hierarchical classification of all the civil and religious offices of a pueblo, coupled with obligatory service in that hierarchy for all male adults of the community. In theory all men must enter at the bottom and work their way by successive yearly terms of office to the top whence they emerge as a principal, or pasado, an elder who has completed his service to the community. The hierarchy of posts actually can be divided conceptually into two categories, one of civil offices, the other of religious cult offices. Church offices, such as *fiscal*, are classed with the civil group, while the *mayordomía* offices fall into the cult category. This dichotomy contrasts with the usual Spanish-mestizo plan where all religious offices, including those of the Church, would be separated from the civil category.

The tendency in the Indian system is to pull civil officers back repeatedly to perform service in the *mayordomías* of the saints' cults. This gives the appearance of a single organization pyramiding to a single authority at the top, whereas the Spanish-mestizo pattern for unified Church and State involves two separate entities working together, a distinction noted by LaFarge (1947:13n). However, in the case of the Indian villages it must not be overlooked that in the vast majority of cases the cult offices are considered to be prerequisites for political office and are in fact supervised by the civil officers themselves, or as often by the emergent *principales*, or elders. The *mayordomías* in these hierarchies are thus conceived as communal obligations, more or less onerous, and the responsibility for seeing that they are accomplished falls to the authorities of the communities. The fact that

there are communities, as Ojitlán, Oaxaca (Weitlaner 1951:445) and Quetzaltepeque, Guatemala (Wisdom 1940:375), where the emergent elders themselves execute the *mayordomías* further emphasizes that cult posts and civil offices are essentially mutually exclusive categories.

The pre-Spanish background of this hierarchical system and its development in the Colonial period has been clarified by Carrasco, who derives both ceremonial sponsorship and hierarchy from aboriginal custom, but which were reconstituted on Spanish forms and adapted to an emerging Indian folk society (Carrasco 1961:483-497). The important point in this consideration is that *mayordomía* was integrated into this system and persists today, in its most developed form, associated with civil hierarchies.

The principles of integrating *mayordomía* into a hierarchy are well demonstrated in the case of the Quiché pueblo of Chichicastenango, Guatemala. Here there are fourteen *cofradías*, each of which is composed of six ranked *mayordomos*; there are no other members. The *cofradías* themselves are ranked in importance, and the first and second *mayordomos* of the six most important ones carry batons of office and form an ecclesiastical council which oversees the activities of all the *cofradías*. New *mayordomos* for any of the *cofradías* are appointed by this council and the civil authorities acting in accord. Service in both the civil and cult hierarchies is obligatory. A boy enters first the very lowest civil posts, then moves into a post as fourth, fifth, or sixth *mayordomo*, leaving that for another civil office only to return later to the *cofradías* as third *mayordomo*. Only service on several occasions as a *mayordomo* makes one eligible for higher office; the civil *alcalde* for example is chosen from the first and second *mayordomos*. *Mayordomos* must pay most of the expenses of their offices from their own pockets; this and the relatively smaller number of high posts causes these posts to gravitate to a small body of wealthy aristocracy (Bunzel 1959:189-90).

Even more rigid is the system of Tlacoatzintepec, a Chinantec village of Oaxaca. Here all males are members of one of five age grades, the topilitos of the church, gente chica, contribuyentes, medio-ancianos, and ancianos principales. Each group pays dues and is organized, with officers who have obtained their positions by a strict register of advancement. All except the lowest group requires the completion of specific civil offices as a prerequisite of membership, during which service individuals are members of no group. The highest group, the ancianos principales, is an emergent group of men whose civil service is through; membership is restricted to those who have passed through the highest civil office of *alcalde*. It is these ancianos principales who assume the direction of religion, and it is they who appoint the *mayordomos* of the saints' cults. *Mayordomos* are selected only from the contribuyentes group, but although obligatory service is inferred, such service to the saints does not in itself grant the individual passage to the next age grade; only by completing specific civil offices as síndico, fiscal, and regidor is a man enabled to move from the contribuyente group to the following medio-anciano group (Weitlaner 1954:158-65).

The principles of relationship between *mayordomía* and the civil hierarchy evident in the structures of Chichicastenango and Tlacoatzintepec are generally valid throughout Middle America wherever the old civil hierarchy is still

intact. These principles define *mayordomía* service as obligatory for all male heads of households, or at least obligatory if appointed by the authorities; as imposed by a high authority group, usually the emergent *principales*; and as a prerequisite for political office, but categorically separate from political office. As well as the examples outlined above, the system has been well described in the Maya area for Chimaltenango (LaFarge 1947:141-42), San Carlos (Gillin 1951:82), Santa Eulalia (LaFarge 1947:19-20, 133-38), and Chamula (Pozas 1959:134-70); and in the Oaxaca area for Ayutla (Beals 1945:21-25), Ojitlan (Weitlaner 1954:445-46), and Yalalag (de la Fuente 1949:213). Published examples in the north are rare, but Kelly identifies it at the Totonac village of San Marcos, Puebla (1953:179-84), and the principles of the system seem to be present in ceremonial remnants at Cherán in the Tarascan area (Beals 1946:131-32).

Traditionally *mayordomía* throughout Mexico and Guatemala has meant the expenditure of at least some of the appointee's personal funds, regardless of whatever other means of support are also present. Much of the meaning in the discharge of the office of *mayordomo* obviously has derived from the symbolic value of the conspicuous expenditure of his accumulated wealth before the eyes of his neighbors. Much of the sacrifice that he makes is of his time. In the more conservative villages of Chiapas and Guatemala this has meant that most or all of his time as a food producer for his family is taken from him for a full year. To remove some of the burden of *mayordomía* expense, two sources of income from beyond the office holder have been variously applied. One of these proceeds from land ownership by the *mayordomía* or *cofradía*, the other is a general contribution levied on all households. Both show some antiquity.

Ownership of communal property was a characteristic of Spanish *cofradías*. Apparently in New Spain it adhered to the parish organization which was imposed on the Indian communities, wherein each pueblo church and each barrio chapel was allotted land, proceeds from which went to the upkeep of the Church structure and to financing the patron's fiesta. At Tepoztlán, Morelos the lands of the barrio chapels are referred to as "the milpas of our santo" and are farmed under the direction of the *mayordomo* of the barrio patron. Redfield suggests that these lands may be the continuation of the communal lands held by the *calpulli*, or native wards, of the pre-Spanish Indian town, which were converted into barrios (Redfield 1930:75-6). A similar conversion of communal lands can be visualized for any native town left intact by the Spanish, but church lands probably also were established for barrios in congregated communities. In Cobán, Alta Vera Paz, Guatemala, seven *cofradías* which formerly corresponded to the seven barrios of the town owned their own lands from which they derived income (Foster 1953:19). At San Francisco Tecospa, a Nahuatl village in the State of Mexico, there is one church, but the town is divided into four named quarters in each of which are located church lands. A *jefe* is appointed for each quarter to see that the lands are worked (Madsen 1957:169).

A general tax on households has been reported from central Mexico. At Mayultianguis, a Chinantec village of Oaxaca, fiestas once were financed by equal contributions collected from all (Weitlaner and Castro 1954:83). The contribution system is highly formalized at Tepoztlán. Each saint's fiesta has two *mayordomos*, one for the candles and one for the fireworks. Each year

on the same day representatives of all the families in the barrio present themselves at the houses of these two mayordomos where, accompanied by ritual, they pay their contributions; the amounts are established by previous pledges which are considered perpetual, irrevocable, and binding on the family after a man's death (Redfield 1930:74-5). At the Pokomam pueblo of San Carlos, Guatemala, money for the patron's fiesta is obtained by parading the saint's image from house to house (Gillin 1951:74). The same custom is practiced at Soteapan, Veracruz, a Popoluca village, where the image is carried from door to door by women accompanied by a men's chorus. They stop at each house and receive contributions of a few ears of maize or money, which are in the charge of the mayordomo of the image (Foster 1942:66-67).

Despite these auxiliary means of subsidizing mayordomías, the cargos generally are largely borne by the mayordomos. It is clear that in the villages where obligatory service is expected the service can be onerous. Under these circumstances a disruption in the authority system of the village and the appearance of competitive, less expensive means of religious expression must lead to a readaptation of mayordomía if it is to persist.

Modern Readjustment

With the growth of mestizo culture and the expansion of national institutions the Indian communities of Middle America have undergone progressive change. The well-integrated, obligatory, homogeneous societies are becoming loosely-integrated, voluntary, class-based societies. These changes have necessitated a reconstitution of the traditional civil-religious hierarchies so that today many have approached the mestizo model. A general characterization of this readjustment has been presented by Cámara (1952:142-73). On this continuum of change mayordomía has also undergone readjustment, and even loss in many cases.

The most effective agents of change have on one hand been those which undermine the authority structure which supports mayordomía, and on the other those which provide adequate alternatives. Representative of the first category is constitutional civil government, with its legal separation of Church and State; representative of the second is the lay religious association, with its economical, voluntary, permanent membership.

The authority structure which we have outlined for traditional mayordomía is the civil-religious hierarchy with its emergent status group, the principales. The civil officers and the principales, aided by a general feeling of community solidarity, were able to assure the perpetuation of mayordomía by imposing mandatory service upon all adult males. The growth of national republican government during the last and present centuries has cut this chain of authority. To be sure, population growth has made the hierarchy unwieldy in larger communities, and universal service has been thus reduced to theory. But the imposition on Indian towns of municipal civil government, divorced of all religious posts in accordance with state and national constitutions, has been the most important single blow to the authority of the Indian elders.

For a time, it appears, an active native hierarchy need not disappear but can continue to function side by side with a legal civil government. Such is the case of Chamula where the Indian population continues to support the

traditional ayuntamiento which exercises authority over mayordomía, despite the fact that a legally constituted ayuntamiento constitucional composed of more educated Indian secretaries operates side by side with it (Pozas 1959: 134-54). In other locations the relatively greater political interest of the mestizos and ladinos and their obviously greater rapport with state and department authorities has resulted in the capture of civil posts by these non-Indian elements. Under these circumstances the Indian hierarchy may shift to one side and become a hierarchy of religious posts only, incorporating Church and cult offices in one series with an emergent principales class at the top as before. San Carlos, Guatemala falls into this category. In San Carlos the ladinos have also effectively set up their own religious system which is essentially non-competitive with the Indian one (Gillin 1951: 78-80).

In situations such as those just cited, it is obvious that not only does the authority exercised by Indian officials and elders become weakened, but also the principle of passage and emergence which is their own sanction for existence. The growth of voluntary option to mayordomía service so severely weakens the principle of hierarchical succession that the principales are deposed completely and become merely the proprietors of a group of mayordomías. At the village of Cherán, Michoacan, such a group, the cabildo, exists. Known also by a Tarascan name meaning "principal men," it administers a group of six mayordomías in competition and roughly parallel to seven others in the town. The cabildo itself is composed of pasados of the Church offices of prioste and colector, which they fill by their own appointees (Beals 1946: 131-33). In a far advanced state of disintegration the former emergent authority group may be recognizable only as a respected status group composed of those who have discharged cargos in the cults. Thus, in Tzintzuntzan no man can be important and respected in his advanced years unless he has served in a mayordomía. His status or prestige does not increase with more than one service (Foster 1948:195).

With the passing of central and coercive authority mayordomía has come to persist in mestizoized pueblos by volunteer service alone. The new relationship between the individual and the saint whose cargo he vows to discharge is adequately represented by the dyadic contract model developed by Foster to describe social interaction in Mexican peasant communities. Specifically it is Foster's asymmetrical type of dyadic contract which here pertains, in which the individual and the person or supernatural being with whom he makes the contract are of different status or order, and the reciprocal obligations are non-complementary. His example of a supplicant lighting candles and hanging votive offerings before an image of the Virgin and promising certain restrictive encumbrances on his life in return for a favor (Foster 1961:1174-75) is explicitly of the same category as taking a saint's cargo on vow or promesa. It is this method that is almost universally present in modern Mexican and Guatemalan communities where hierarchies and mandatory service are lacking.

Constitutional civil authority not only has undermined the authority structure of mayordomía but has also contributed to the disappearance of barrio organization and barrio solidarity by creating new territorial divisions in towns irrespective of traditional barrio lines. Sometimes these new divisions are so little used or correspond sufficiently to the old barrio lines that they

do not disrupt the barrio-based ceremonial life. This is the case with the new ejido divisions of Ojitlán, Oaxaca (Weitlaner 1951:443), and the demarcaciones of Tepoztlán (Redfield 1930:72). But sometimes barrio solidarity is destroyed. The Popoluca village of Sayula, Veracruz, for instance, had two barrios in the nineteenth century which functioned in the traditional civil-religious hierarchy. Later a constitutional municipality was established and four secciones replaced the barrios, which ultimately disappeared (Guiteras Holmes 1952b).

The disappearance of the traditional authority structure and the appearance of voluntary service associated with dyadic contract rather than with community responsibility has permitted competitive institutions to encroach on the traditional domain of mayordomía. Economy is an essential feature of these new forms of religious expression. This can be provided by a shortened form of mayordomía, such as the velorio at Soteapan, Veracruz. The velorio here follows largely the same mechanics as a mayordomía. A man makes a promise to the saint, arranges to have the image installed at his house where it is feted in an overnight celebration, and returns to the church the next day (Foster 1942:67). The affair is short, does not involve a major fiesta, and is cheap.

Voluntary lay religious associations are probably the most successful competitors of mayordomía. They are very characteristic of mestizo society. In Quiroga, Michoacan, a Spanish-speaking European and mestizo village, there were sixteen lay religious organizations active in the twenty years prior to Brand's study in 1945, but the pueblo at that time sponsored only one mayordomía, that of the patron (Brand 1951:203-4). Generally this pattern holds true for Middle America as a whole; as the number of lay associations goes up the number of mayordomías goes down.

Lay religious associations are structurally quite different from mayordomía groups. In many respects they are much more similar to true cofradías and hermandades and in fact sometimes bear these terms in their official titles. From the descriptions provided by Foster (1948:202-4) and others, the following characterization of the religious associations can be made. Membership is voluntary and generally for life. They are sex-segregated, with women's organizations far outnumbering men's; groups which ostensibly are open to both sexes are segregated within. Youth associations also occur, as do auxiliaries of religious orders. The purposes of the associations as verbalized or stated in their charters are varied and vague. Rarely are they organized around the direct care of an image. Many have an insignia or special costume. They are usually headed by a president, secretary, and treasurer. Rapport with the organized Church through the parish priest is often close. Finally, low prestige is attached to membership in lay religious associations. The associations can become immensely popular. Brand has observed that probably 90 percent of the adult population of Quiroga belongs to one or more of these associations (Brand 1951:203).

In some places, lay associations have absorbed functions that once belonged to mayordomías. At Yalalag, Oaxaca, the religious aspects of all fiestas, including the novenas, rosaries, processions, and high and low masses, are in charge of the feminine hermandad (de la Fuente 1949:276). Hermandades at Sayula, Veracruz help the individual mayordomo by collecting maize and money on house to house rounds through the year (Guiteras 1952b:125).

With the growth of mestizo values the fiestas at the pueblo level of organization have become more and more secularized, and mayordomos have ceased to function. Civil government, motivated by economic ends in many cases, has stepped in and taken over the organization of these affairs. In the more urbanized Maya villages of Yucatan the organizers of these fiestas are civil appointees, diputados, who are not under solemn oath to a saint and who organize the fiesta as popular entertainment which pays expenses or better. The religious part of the fiesta here consists only of formal masses conducted by priests from the city (Redfield and Villa 1934:157-8). At Cherán, Michoacán, the fiesta of the patron saint and other pueblo-wide Church festivals are the responsibility of commissioners who are named by the civil mayor from each of the administrative barrios. These commissioners, to pay for the fiestas, collect donations from each household. The civil appointees are a temporary organization and are not connected with the remaining mayordomías of the same town (Beals 1946:120-28).

Summary and Conclusion

The introduction of the Spanish institution of mayordomía to Middle America involved its separation from its usual Spanish vehicle, the cofradía. In its New World setting mayordomía became the function of a set of officers specially constituted for a term of one year. These teams of officers were organized in the Indian communities on the framework of the Spanish parish system with its associated structure of territorial patron saints. The basic unit of mayordomía organization was the barrio, or ward; when a mayordomía functioned at the community level, the structure of its body of officers reflected equal representation from the component barrios. A supporting structure for the institution was the civil-religious hierarchy in which mayordomía was incorporated as a prerequisite for political office and hierarchical advancement. The emergent authorities in the structure supervised a system of mandatory service for all adult males. With the introduction of civil municipal government, divorced of religious functions, the authority structure supporting mayordomía has been weakened or destroyed, and it has come to depend on volunteer service motivated by the seeking of status and by vows made to the saints. The voluntary basis and high cost of mayordomía have left it vulnerable in the mestizoized village to competing religious institutions, particularly lay associations. Its religious functions are being absorbed by the lay associations, and pueblo level fiestas, formerly its domain, are being secularized and managed by the civil authorities.

With the development of Mediterranean-type peasant culture in Mexico and Guatemala, a new type of religious organization is dominating the scene in former Indian villages. This is the lay religious association, and although it approximates in an ephemeral way the structure of the early brotherhoods of Spain, it does so without commitment to the mayordomía of a patron saint.

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