

The Early Path, from the Sacred to the Profane in Fermented Beverages in New Galicia, New Spain (Mexico), Seventeenth to Eighteenth Century

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The Beginning of the Path: Introduction

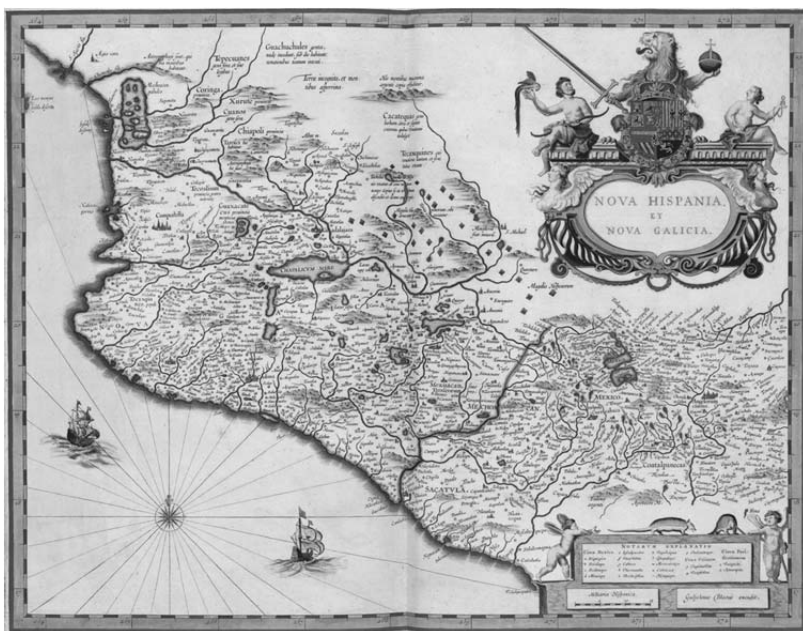
From an Ethno-historical perspective, the objectives of the present paper are to show changes in perceptions of fermented beverages, as they lost their sacral nature in a good part of the baroque society of New Spain's Viceroyalty,¹ turning into little more than profane beverages in the eye of the law of the Spanish crown for the new American territories, specifically for the Kingdom of New Galicia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, within the New Spain viceroyalty. At the time the newly profane beverages were discredited in urban places, were subject to displacement by distilled beverages, being introduced from both oceans – from the Atlantic by the way of the Metropolis, and from the Pacific through the Manilla Galleon. The new distilled beverages converged in western New Spain, where Guadalajara was the economic, political, religious, and cultural centre.

To begin with, it is necessary to stress that the fermentation process has been used for many purposes since ancient times. Most notably, it has been used in medicine, in nutrition, and as part of religion and rituality for most societies around the world.

1 This area, after its independence process in the beginning of the nineteenth century, was known as Mexico. Before this date, it belonged to the Spanish Crown as New Spain, also as part of other territories situated along the American continent. The New Galicia Kingdom was a territory inside the New Spain Viceroyalty in the West. Its capital was Guadalajara. This city rose as a strong and powerful centre, because it had the potential to become another Viceroyalty, but this was not convenient for Mexico City. Nonetheless, the expeditions to Northern territories, including to the California area, started from New Galicia, as well as connections with the Philippines and, later, with China.

This method is understood as follows:

The modification of the structure of raw materials like fruits, cereals, vegetables, meats, among others, through the actions of several microorganisms that, through metabolic reactions, mainly from the sugars from these meals, allows the formation of organic acids as: acetic, lactic, butyric and propionic, and some alcohols such as ethanol and lactic and release of some amino acids. These reactions bring as consequence modifications in the meal, related to its flavour, odour, texture, and colour.²



Map 1: “Nova Hispania et nova Galicia”, map by Willem Jansz Blaeu. 38 x 49.5 cm. 1634 (Delsaerdt et al. 2004, 56f; photo by ESCO a DE SCHUTTER Co.)

Fermentation has been used by mankind for thousands of years to make cheeses, beers, yogurts, other beverages (including alcoholic ones), breads, etc. In the case of alcoholic beverages, lactic acid concentration, the amount of acetic acid, of proteins, fats, ethanol, niacin and ash vary in amount according to the specific fermentation process that takes place in each beverage or food prepared.

Fermentation is a catabolic process, where the basic components of bacteria and yeasts are separated, where oxygen is not necessary to support the process.

2 Wachter Rodarte 2004, 9. Quotations from Modern Spanish like this are presented herewithout reproduction of the original in an English translation by María de la Paz Solano Pérez.

The microorganisms proper of fermentations processes are variables. They are determined by ingredients used, and the modalities and the environment where ferment is produced. Many of the ingredients generate desirable changes. Ethanol, also called alcoholic fermentation, results when the pyruvic acid from certain plant tissues, invertebrates and microorganisms is oxidized through this anaerobic process, where acetaldehyde and a residue that is ethanol and carbon dioxide (CO_2) is obtained, as can be seen in following image (Fig. 1):

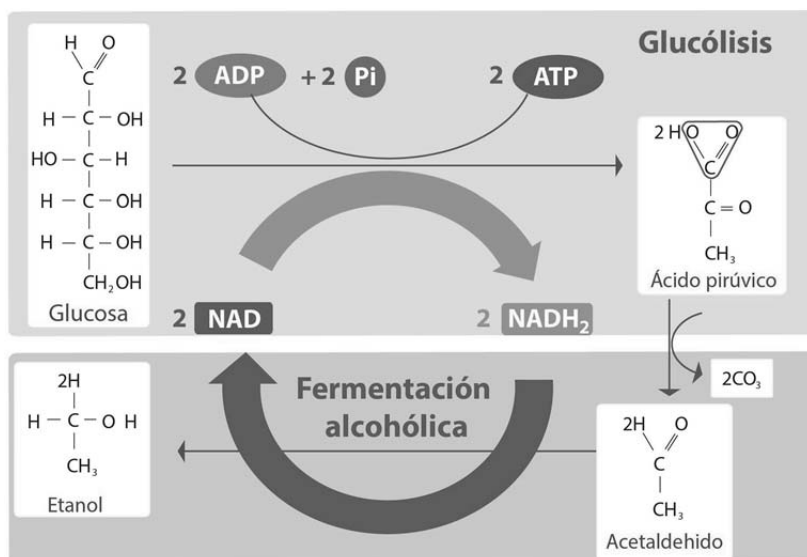


Fig. 1: Alcoholic fermentation and its sub processes from glucose (De Vreesse Pieters 2014)

In lactic-alcoholic fermentation and later alcoholic-acetic, the pH balance allows colloidal homogeneous consistency throughout the liquid. If the pH decreases, colloidal tension is broken and the result can be considered a fermented product but spoiled, at least in the case of the beverages of ancient Mesoamerica.³ Alcoholic concentration in naturally fermented in comparison with distilled beverages (calculated in a rank of +35°) is less (3–20°),⁴ with the expression of *Gay-Lussac* degrees (°GL):

In English-speaking countries the expression “Degrees Proof” is often used. The *Gay-Lussac* degrees indicate the volume ratio of ethyl alcohol or ethanol content in

³ Cf. Ulloa, Herrera and Lappe 1987.

⁴ Cf. Gutiérrez González 2001, 41, 44f, 338f.

the drink, that is, how many litres of ethyl alcohol is in 100 litres. For example, when a label speaks of 40 °GL, this indicates that each one hundred litres of the alcoholic drink contain 40 litres of ethyl alcohol. This measurement is accurate, if it is made at a temperature of 15°C. In the case of measuring the alcoholic strength in the degrees proof, this figure indicates twice the actual alcohol content; so a drink that indicates 80° Proof, is equivalent to 40° GL.⁵

The following table best exemplifies this:⁶

Kind of Beverage	Fermented	Mixed (50% fermented, 50% distilled)	Distilled
Alcohol content	3-20° GL	18-45°GL	+35° GL
Also known as:	Generous drinks, Table wines, Low alcohol drinks, Ferments	Creams, Liquors, Amaretto, Cocktails, Punch, Digestives	High alcohol drinks, Spirits, Distills
Some examples	Pulque, Tescüino / Tejuino, Colonche, Beers, Table Wines, Sparkling wines, Tepache, Sidra	Almond Liquor, Pomegranate punch, Coffee Liquor, Quince Liqueur	Tequila, Mezcal, Raicilla, Sotol, Vodka, Gin, Rum, Cachaça, Brandy, Whisky

Tab. 1: Descriptive diagram on the world of alcoholic beverages

As we can observe from the practices of Mexican rural communities, particularly those in western and northeastern Mexico, and as shown in the field research of Henry Bruman (1913–2005), León Diguët (1859–1926) and Carl Sophus Lumholtz (1851–1922),⁷ there are defined alcoholic beverages distributed over the whole Mexican republic. This has also been shown by the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous People (CDI its Spanish acronym – Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblo Indígenas), a federal organization set up to guide public programs for communities and emerging peoples in Mexico. The CDI says that in the western areas of Mexico the emphasis is on the following beverages: *pulque*, *mezcal*,⁸

5 Gutiérrez González 2001, 40f.
6 Gutiérrez González 2001, 44.
7 Bruman 2000, 3-6; Diguët 1992, 195-229; Lumholtz 1986, Part I, 248-253, 324-348, Part II, 181-186, 213, 241f, 260.
8 The word “*mezcal*” has a prehispanic derivation. It comes from *Mexcalmetl*, the variety of agave plant most used by the societies involved; but for the preparation of sacral beverages a variety known as *Tepemexcall* was used. That word means *montana* or *montino maguëy*, the derivation coming from *tepetl* (mount) and *mexcalla* which also means *mezcal*. Today this is the variety of agave best known including the “*aunso*” or “*chino*” widely grown in Jalisco. Cf. Luna Zamora 1991, 30. In the present paper there will be no discussion of a possible prehispanic distillation, but agave was used to ferment liquor in a wide geographical area and subsequently

corn cane juice, fruits and cactus punches and liquors, *charanda*, *pulque* of corn, also known as “indigenous beer” (the same as the “*chicha*” of South America), tepache made mainly with pineapple but also with apples, oranges, guavas and more, and *tesguino*, with its non-indigenous Mestizo version called *tejuino*.⁹

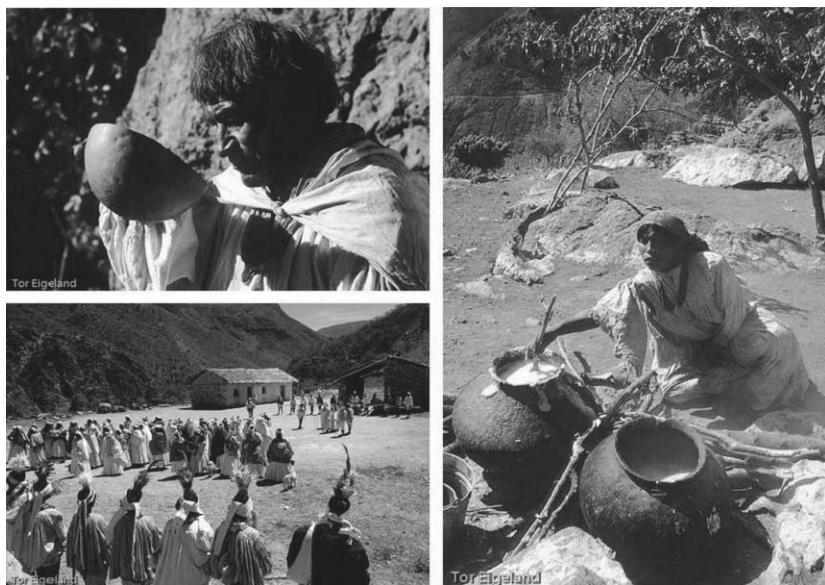


Fig. 2: Tesguino in a ritual-religious context, Rarámuri community (photos by Tor Eigeland)

In Mexico the principal fermented liquids are made with corn, agave and, to a lesser degree, with fruits and cactus. The major part of these drinks are used in ritualistic-religious contexts: for the veneration of gods, marking the beginning or end of a hunt, of sowing or harvesting; for government changes, those taking place within an ethnic group, but also in some marriages, or at the feasts of some patron saints or deities. Religious ceremonies, especially those coming from ancient cultures or religions, have a close relationship to sacral history. Konrad Preuß (1869–1938) in his work *Der religiöse Gehalt der Mythen* (The Religious Content of Myth, 1933) reflects on this point. Karl Kerényi (1897–1973) corroborates this, when he says that mythology is

through commercial and other contacts distillation technology entered Mexico and *mezcal* and later Tequila became new ways for agave use.

9 Cf. CDI 2013.

anything but immobile but is latent and vibrant for those who understand its recesses and metaphors, not only in literal aspect.¹⁰ It is nothing short of a reality. Ancient man had strong reasons to seek for explanations about his environment in it and thus have deities near.

In the present paper, only some of the beverages mentioned above will be discussed, those occurring frequently in the sources. We will begin with major characteristics and distributions.

One of these beverages is known under the name of *tesgüino*. It is made with grains of corn mixed with water. The final ferment is consumed unstrained. There is no pasteurization (by boiling), permitting thus the survival of the fermenting microorganisms. The result is what appears to be a coffee-milk, with a thick consistency, but a corn flavour. To this other catalyser ingredients can be added to help in the fermentation process: *Quercus leaves crassifolia* Humboldt & Bonpl., *Stevia serrata* Car., *Chimaphila maculata* Pursh., *Datura metoloides* Dunal; *Bromus arizonicus* (Shear) *Phaseolus metcalfei* Woot y Standl., *Hieracium fendleri* Sch. Bip.¹¹ Instead of catalysers some communities add fortifiers that are herbs or roots that provoke or fortify, increasing the effects of drunkenness not through alcohol levels but through hallucinogen alcaloids: Peyote (*Lophophora williamsii*) and Shum (*Ariocarpus fissuratus*).¹² Henry Bruman identified in his work several of the additives and beverages used in the religious festivities of indigenous peoples.¹³ This *tesgüino* described in his work is used by Rarámuri, Cora and Wixaritari (Huicholes) groups.¹⁴

The use of Mestizo *tesgüino*, better known as *tejuino*, is completely different, because neither fortifiers nor catalysers are used, also the drink is not used for any festivity nor ritual; the drink's only use is digestive and refreshing. It sells in the cities at ambulant stalls and in weekly ambulant markets called *tianguis*. It has a lower alcoholic level (in some places where it sells it has postings confirming a null fermentation process and alcoholic content). To it are added sugar cane or piloncillo cubes (ingredients that indigenous variety does not contain) and ice; also it is seasoned by consumers with lemon juice, salt, lemon ice cream, and in some places with chili powder.

10 Cf. Kerényi 1999, 13f.

11 Ulloa, Herrera and Lappe 1987, 22f.

12 Ulloa, Herrera and Lappe 1987, 22f.

13 Bruman 2000, 103f.

14 Cf. Lumholtz 1986, Part I, 248-253, 349-371; Diguët 1992, 200-205.



Fig. 3: Tejuino is the urban version of indigenous Tescüino (photos by the author)

Agumiel is the sweet sap extracted from ripe agave *pulque* (ripe means when the agave ceases to grow leaves and the 5 meter height floral stem arises, called *Quiote*) through suction and led by a pipette called *acocote*; the *Tlachiquero* is the person who creates the suction with the *acocote* to get the *aguamiel*. It comes from the heart of the plant and once extracted, it is placed in a jar or a wineskin.¹⁵ Among the agave plants used for *aguamiel* extraction, the most important are *Agave atrovirens* Karw.¹⁶ and *Agave salmiana*.¹⁷ Bruman said there were a wide variety.¹⁸

Thus, to benefit from that substance, is used an artifice that obligates to the plant to accumulate, under the form of reserves, all the sap that could have been consumed uselessly. For this, in the top of the trunk or *Mezonte* it is practiced a kind of blunting that stops the appearance of the pole; it is a delicate work that only a well-trained worker can do.¹⁹

15 Cf. Diguet, L. 1992, 204.

16 Cf. Ulloa, Herrera and Lappe 1987, 33.

17 Cortés Zárraga and Basurto Peña 2006.

18 Bruman 2000, 67f.

19 Diguet 1992, 204.

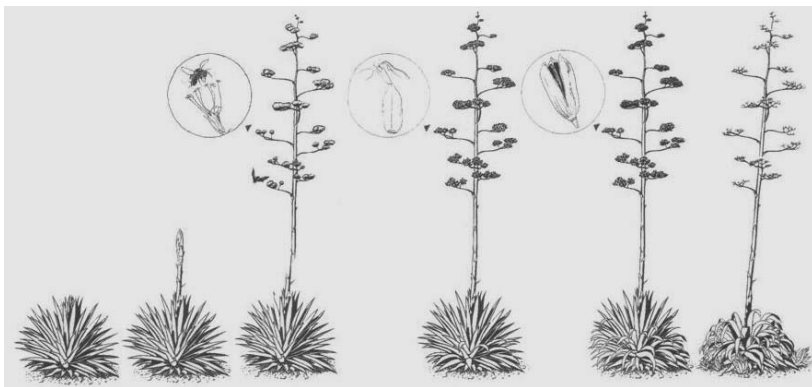


Fig. 4: Agave Cycle (Valenzuela-Zapata 2003, 138f; illustration by Paul Mirocha)

The consistency of the *aguamiel* is white and viscous, fermented it is called *pulque*.

A diversity of maguey species grow in the central plateau between 2.000–2.400 meters above sea level and these have a great adaptability to grow in unfertile areas; it is a perennial plant, ideal for the Mexican plateau environment, frost and drought resistant. This explains why *pulque* has become to be an alimentary complement that can be drunk instead of water during the dry months and the constant droughts. It also helps as a medicinal drink.²⁰

Like those associated with other beverages, the great *pulque* tradition dates from prehispanic times. *Pulque* is one of most studied fermented beverages from many perspectives. It was a component of rituals and ceremonies per preference for the peoples of central Mexico during pre-Columbian era, an offering and a product stemming from the Mayahuel goddess in the Mexica (Aztec) culture.

Full discussion of this topic can be found elsewhere. Actually, *pulque* is also consumed by Nahua and Mestizo (non-indigenous) groups in the Valley of Mexico and in its surroundings. It is known for its favourable properties that it has by virtue of its lower alcoholic level (4–6° GL), meaning that it can be consumed by children. In rural communities, and in some urban ones, it is drunk as a complement to meals or accompanying meals, because it has a high content of C and B-complex vitamins. It has curative characteristics for digestive apparatus diseases like: asthenia, anorexia, kidney infections, gastric or duodenal ulcers, gastritis, esophagitis, and more.²¹ It effects all depend on the season of the year,

²⁰ Corcuera de Mancera 1991, 18.

²¹ Cf. Ulloa, Herrera and Lappe 1987, 34.

processing modes, even the ethnic group that consume it. Mixed up with other ingredients (fruits, vegetables, seeds) it is known as “Curado”. *Pulque* was *par excellence* the beverage made by the Gods and consequently it must be used in their honour. *Pulque* has a full and close relationship with the Earth and thus, with fertility – for example, in the ancient Mexica festivity 1-Pedernal (*Ce-Tecpatl* in Nahuatl. 1-Flint) where *pulque* represents the holy link. A rite to celebrate death, common people uses it to celebrate life.

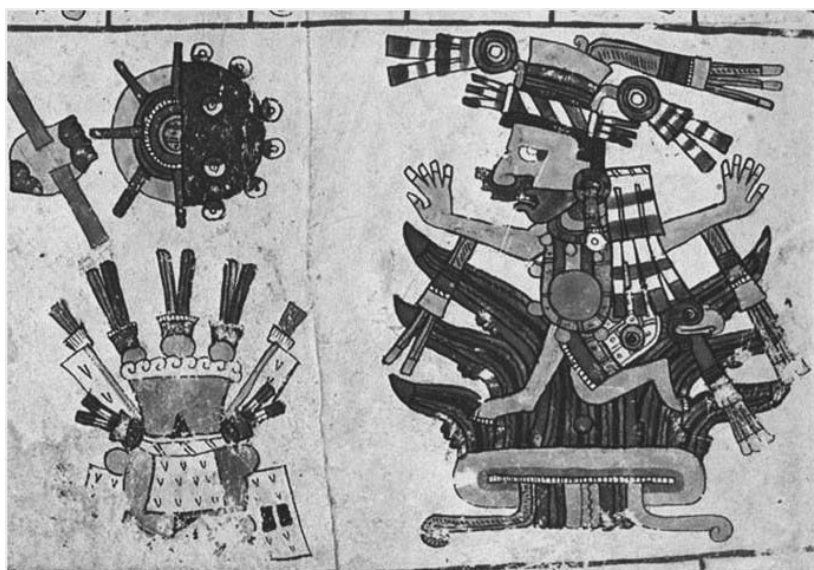


Fig. 5: “Mayahuel Goddess and a Pulque Pot” (Borgia Codex, 68)

Like *pulque*, *colonche* is a traditional beverage; and it has a similar antiquity. It is consumed basically in the arid regions of the country and is prepared during the harvest season from cactus fruits known under the name of “*tuna*”. According to Ulloa, Herrera and Lappe, it is a variety of *nopal*, with emphasis on *O. orbiculata* Salm-Dyck (“*tuna pintadera*”), *Opuntia streptacantha* Lem. (“*tuna cardona*”), *O. leucotricha* D. C. (“*duraznillo*”) and *O. robusta* Wendl (“*tuna tapona*”).²² This, like the other beverages mentioned, is made by the women of the communities. It has a sweet consistency, is lightly gasified and has a rancid smell or butyrate and avitaminic concentration lower than *pulque*.

²² Ulloa, Herrera and Lappe 1987, 45.

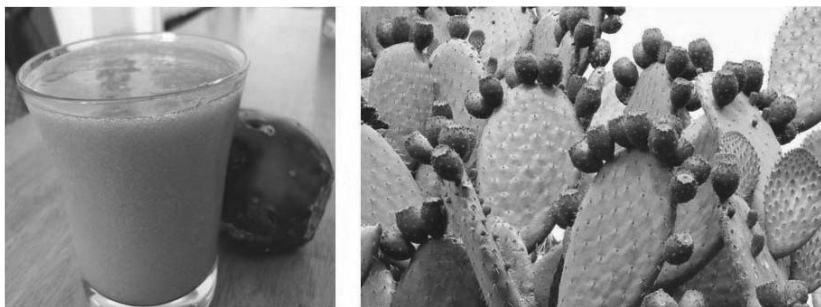


Fig. 6: El Colonche, ferment extracted from Cactus fruits (photos by Bill Steen)



Fig. 7: Tepache is a fermented beverage made with Pineapple peels.

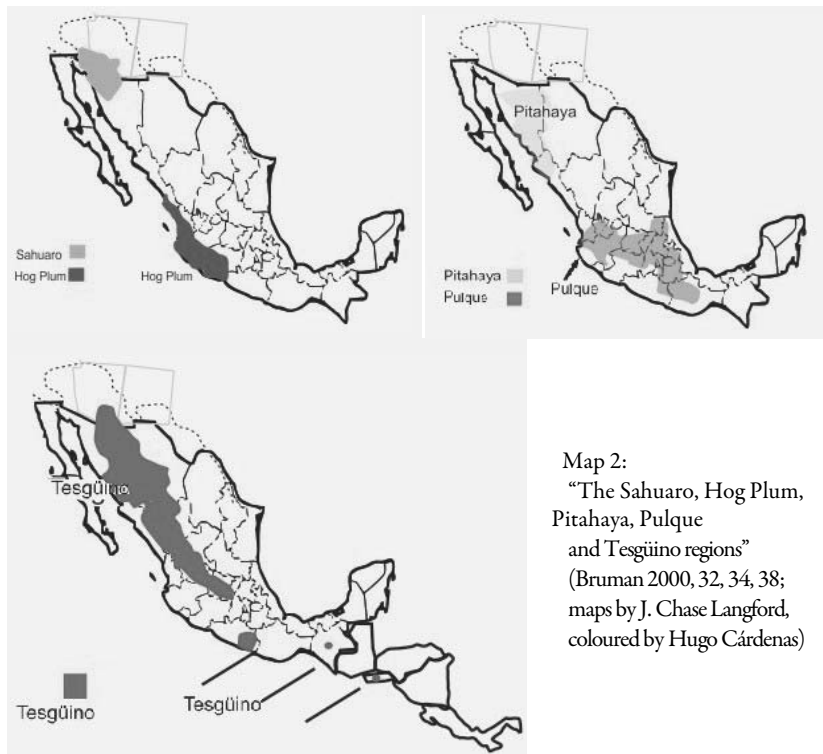
After several days of fermentation it turns into vinegar (photos by Bill Steen)

Tepache is a refreshing beverage with lower alcoholic content found widely in Mexican territory. It is basically processed from the juice and the pulp of fruits like pineapple (*Ananas comosus*), Guava (*Psidium guajava*) or from Myrtle (*Myrtus communis*).²³ In some indigenous communities it is made with corn seeds, having a similitude to South American *chicha*. In comparison with *tesgüino*, Tepache has a light consistency of sweet flavour. If its fermentation is prolonged before it is consumed as an alcoholic beverage, it may become vinegar, with pineapple or apple flavours added as homemade ingredients, and this vinegar is used in gastronomical traditions, for example as the *birria* from the state of Jalisco.

The following maps (Map 2) describing the distribution of some beverages discussed above are taken from Henry Bruman:²⁴

²³ SIAP 2014.

²⁴ Bruman 2000, 32, 34, 38.



As a cultural territory, Mesoamerica²⁵ had wonderful plants and plant products used to produce fermented beverages with ritual-religious uses to glorify the deities. These were sacred drinks but at the same time profane, because any excess was hardly punished by society. *Pulque*, like other similar beverages, was a final product expressing the relationship between man and his environment.

25 The first scholar to provide a broad description of the concept of a Mesoamerica was the German researcher Paul Kirchhoff (1900–1972). Mesoamerica, as a great cultural-geographical area, comprises northwestern, western, central and south Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, and some territorial portions of Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, where there developed between 1500 BC and 1521 AC different cultures that are considered civilizations. Cf. Kirchhoff 1943. The ideas Kirchhoff advanced regarding the time-space distribution of the prehispanic cultures have continued to have validity, but they have been delimited as nothing more than an area excluding other cultures; thus the concept has now been expanded to include the great northern peripheral area named "The Great Chichimeca", re-named to be "The Mesoamerican Southwest". Cf. Broda 2008, 218f.

PULQUE

(Fermentation process: 1-15 days)

The diagram shows the distribution of Pulque by indigenous group and state. It is organized into three main columns: Nahuas, Otomíes, and Mazahuas & Matlatzincas. Each column has a list of states or regions associated with that group, connected by a bracket.

- Nahuas**: State of Mexico, Federal District, Tlaxcala, Morelos, Hidalgo, Michoacán Jalisco, Guanajuato, Veracruz, San Luis Potosí, Puebla, Oaxaca.
- Otomíes**: Federal District, State of Mexico, Morelos, Hidalgo, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, Querétaro, Veracruz.
- Mazahuas & Matlatzincas**: State of Mexico, Morelos.

TESGÜINO

(Fermentation process: 1-10 days)

Yaqui & Pima -- Sonora
Rarámuri & Guarijitos -- Chihuahua, Sonora
Tepehuanes -- Durango, Zacatecas
Wixárika -- Jalisco, Nayarit
Zapotecos -- Oaxaca

COLONCHE

(Fermentation process: 1-5 days)

Mestizo Population: San Luis Potosí, Zacatecas,
Guanajuato, Durango, Querétaro, Nuevo León, Coahuila,
Aguascalientes
Yaquis: Sonora, Sinaloa
Rarámuri: Chihuahua, Sonora

PONCHE DE CIRUELA, JOBO OR HOG PLUM

(Fermentation process: 1-10 days)

Mestizo Populations: Jalisco, Nayarit,
Sinaloa, Michoacán, Guerrero, San Luis
Potosí, Veracruz.

TEPACHE

(Fermentation process: 1-8 days)

Pápagos, Sonora
Trique, Oaxaca
Amuzgos, Oaxaca, Guerrero
Chinantecos & Mixtecos, Oaxaca
Guerrero, Puebla, Veracruz
Mestizo Populations, Oaxaca, Jalisco,
Colima, Nayarit, Michoacán,
Guanajuato, Zacatecas.

SAHUARO

(Fermentation process: 1-5 days approx.)

Papago -- Sonora, Arizona
Pima -- Sonora, Arizona
Maricopa -- Sonora, Arizona
Seri -- Sonora
Yuma -- Arizona
Yavapai -- Arizona
Walapai -- Arizona
Western Apache -- Arizona

DIAGRAM BY:

María de la Paz Solano Pérez, September 24th
2015.

SOURCES:

—Ulloa, M., Herrera, T. & Lappe, P. (1987).
Fermentaciones tradicionales indígenas de México.
México: Instituto Nacional Indigenista.

—Bruman, H. J. (2000) *Alcohol in Ancient Mexico*.
Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press.

Tab. 2: Consumption of fermented beverages by indigenous groups in Mexico

However, excesses were not accepted. The resulting drunkenness was only allowed for priests, high-class society members and old people.

[...] I do not judge that I must shut up about the use of wine that only was allowed for too-old people and never in public but in private. But when it was the young that was found drunk, if born into a high lineage, they strangulate him with a string, but if plebeian, he dies stalked.²⁶

26 Hernández 2000, 67f. Cf. De Sahagún 2001, 304f.

Use of beverages proper with connections attributable to the gods is known from chronicles and codices.²⁷ The Mendocino codex talks about regulations of drinks, even of obligatory related tributes.²⁸ For western Mesoamerica, sources are limited or not useful requiring us to take into consideration comparisons with traditions from the peoples of the centre. As elsewhere too, tradition and knowledge were taught by oral transmission.



Fig. 8: "Two-rabbit Vessel" (Florentino Codex, Bk. IV, Ch. V, 523)

In the case of central Mexico, the pattern of life was determined by the Mexica calendar (*tonallamati*) which set the destiny of the people for specific days. The attributes of the calendar were accepted and applied by Mesoamerican society as a whole.

This calendar of Indians had for every day its idol or spirit with names of males and female goddesses. The days of the year (with such names and figures) were together like regular calendars or roman breviaries with a saint for each day. When children

27 Cf. Caso 2009, 57-70; Gonçalves de Lima 1978, 119ff.

28 Cf. Berdan 2014.

were born they took the name of the day on the calendar. They were one-flower, or two-rabbit: and this female name gave her one spindle and a weave stick [...].²⁹

In those days the name two-rabbit (*ome-tochtli*, in Nahuatl) was reserved for the *pulque* god. A person with that name had a predisposition to be drunk.³⁰

Many of the ritual ceremonies were proper to priests and the nobility but there also existed collective ceremonies for populations living outside main cities.

Popular drunkenness was produced during the harvest and during ceremonies related to rain, births, matrimony, funerals, initiation rites, also with festivities for particular deities. Festivities were accompanied by drunkenness, and prolonged for a long period of time, even days. During this period devotees got drunk.³¹

Rites are symbolic expressions of values and expectations with a vision of the ephemeral human existence set off against infinity. The substantialization of the divine through ingestion of ferment permitted a connection with the divine or possession, of residency in the scent of the gods. In this connection, fermented beverages were restricted to determined uses and all excess beyond the ritual was punished. It was necessary to contain excess, in order to make a comparison between practice and the ritual of the religious relationship and the vision of the cosmos in the everyday life of the indigenous. For this reason, social life was strongly confirmed with teachings of the religious and of military life.

Festivities were strongly established by rains, sowings and harvest times, and in some cases by sacrifice days. For ancient Mexicans, the 'stem plants' which belong to the common life: agave, corn, *nopal*, bring nutriment, clothing and medicines. The importance of the use of these stem-plants in the life of ancient Mexicans can be seen in diverse representations such as codexes, vessels, pottery, and as historical-archaeological survivals. They remain in the memory and as a tangibility of the endeavour of time and human acts. But in baroque era the situation was completely different.

Were really all beverages to be forbidden?

29 De Benavente 2001, 90f.

30 Cf. De Sahagún 2001, 319f.

31 Taylor 1987, 57. Cf. De Sahagún 2001, 85-89; De Benavente 2001, 97-101.

The Path Slope: Fermented Beverages during the Colonial Years

From the indigenous perspective, conquest meant something more than invasion. At the moment of the European contact (and after 1521), the previous way of life changed radically; Mesoamerican élite groups were eliminated or displaced; lands were confiscated and redistributed, creating the *castas* system.³² Ancient regulating laws disappeared and epidemics (like smallpox, typhus or measles) decreased indigenous populations by thousands and all aspects of indigenous life were Hispanized, imposing European laws and catholic parameters, with regular taxes and prohibitions. Public construction and the maintenance of parishes and convents, of public buildings, a process of urbanization, development, and the selling and production of cattle and farm products, accelerated this process.

After rigid control disappeared, excesses and libertinisms started among the Indians. Spanish teachings with the purpose of using European statutes to regulate were proclaimed in Spanish language to be better evangelized; clergy men became authorities among the populations of the great cities, in this way the rule was that they

[...] act informally like judges, and in some times watch for the tax receipts, debriefing the high authorities of the province about the conditions of the locality and determine the cycles of seasons and lives of citizens according to the new religion.³³

Catholic religion was essential to the government because it influenced all that it dominated, and assisted in the creation of the politic as its observance was a part of it all.

32 *Castas* (castes) are groups that were integrated into Mexico's social system at that time. They were firmly associated with all aspects of society, social, economic, and cultural, and also with ancestry, occupation and physical appearance. The system closely reflected the three main groups participating, e. g. Spaniards, Indians, and "blacks". Within the system, the Spaniards had the most power and dominated those brought in from Africa as slaves, the least desirable ones. Membership in a given *casta* was determined by ancestry, and social rights were delimited by the *casta's* social and economic associations. These *castas* were large and complex. More information can be found in the baptismal records of the Spanish era and in the so-called *casta* paintings.

The society of *castas* was the social-hierarchical order used to designate population groups expressing the *mestizaje*, "mixture", that stratified the entire population of Spanish possessions in the American continent at the time and which, in turn, was characterized by ethnic inequality, with a large gap between aristocracy and minorities. This caste system was not as strict as the Indian one in the Old World. There was a constant mixture among the *castas*, resulting in several sub-*castas*.

33 Taylor 1987, 37.

For Spaniards, drunkenness in Indians was something due for eradication: Accusations against the Indians included excessive drunkenness with *pulque* and *tepache* causing social problems, social deviance, disease and crime. It was the origin of all that was vicious and of poverty.

The worry of Spaniards about indigenous inebriation was differently applied to those who only drank. Colonial government made a beginning with a law in 1529, restricting the use of additives in *pulque*, and then with regulations in a code issued by the Viceroy in 1546 containing the rules about applications of corporal punishments to Indians who got drunk with any kind of drink.³⁴

Either by syncretism or blasphemy, under the eye of the Catholic Church, the feasts of Indians lasted several days. During them just one Indio could drink an amount equal to what twenty Spaniards could together.

The water was poor in quality, even contaminated, thus rural communities chose beverages obtained from plants, also because water was scarce for several months. Liquor was obtained in weekly *tianguis* and obtaining it was a part of the organization of peoples taking part in celebrations, and religious festivities, and as medicines and cures, as Toribio of Benavente wrote:

Cooked in clay pots the wine was boiled, along with added roots and that indigenous called *ocpatl*, meaning medicine or wine marinade. The result was a wine so strong, that all those who drank a lot strongly intoxicated themselves and thus made themselves more cruel and bestial [...]. All the medicines that local people have to drink when unwell are put into this wine, it is put into a mug or a cup and the wine poured on it. This is a medicine that will be applied for the cure and health of the sick.³⁵

Drunkenness increased as a protest against the colonial imposition or as a part of religious syncretism in later centuries. There was passive resistance as well as refusal to strangers wishing to enter into a community (there were even formal days for this, the norm existing by a local patriarchal hegemony).

Regulations appeared for anything considered as drunkenness varying from one region to another, but allowing drinking in private festivities, on royal roads and trails outside the towns.

³⁴ Taylor 1987, 70.

³⁵ Benavente 2001, 294. Cf. De Sahagún 2001, 986f.

Spanish functionaries believed that alcohol was the main cause of crimes committed by Indians and *castas*. A condition of being drunk was often accepted as sufficient to pronounce a sentence in court.³⁶

Nevertheless, moral implications existed for the *castas*, subject of complaints by their neighbours, as testimonies of the *oidor* ("Hearing magistrate") make clear. One of those cases was referred to the *oidor* Juan Dávalos y Toledo in 1616. He had been given instructions by King Philip III to concern himself with the treatment of the natives from the regions; with researching different social, religious, justice, administrative problems, and with creating questionnaires to get information. The first of his questions said:

Primeramente, si los yndios (sic) tienen cuidado de yr (sic) a la doctrina y oyr (sic) missa (sic). Y si ay vorrachos (sic) y personas (sic) que hagan vino de cualquier manera y genero que sea. Y si tienen respecto al ministro de Doctrina y le obedecen y si acude bien y con puntualidad a su enseñanza, como está obligado el dicho ministro de doctrina, y a desirles (sic) misa, confesarles y sacramentarles.³⁷

Thus official visitors and questionnaire informants were replaying questions. An example of this was the testimony given by father Bartolomé Chaves, about Zapotlán del Rey in the modern state of Jalisco on the 18th October 1616. He wrote:

A la primera pregunta dixo (sic) que lo que dellos (sic) se sabe es que en todo los pueblos de su feligresía ay (sic) muchas borracheras en especial los días de las fiestas de los indios y otras del año cue (sic) acuden bien a la doctrina y le tienen respecto (sic) y obediencia y cue (sic) en muchas partes los dichos indios hacen (sic) vino de todo genero (sic). Y esto sabe desta (sic) pregunta.³⁸

36 Taylor 1987, 104.

37 Razo Zaragoza 2004, 47. "Firstly, if Indians are careful to adhere to the doctrine and to hear the service, and if there are any drunkards and people who make wine whatever way and kind it may be. And if they have respect for the minister of the doctrine and obey him, and if he goes well and punctually to his teaching, as the said minister of doctrine is obliged, to offer them the service and allow them to confess and provide sacraments". Translation from Spanish of Seventeenth century by María de la Paz Solano Pérez.

38 Razo Zaragoza 2004, 147. "In answer to the first question he said that from what he knew the people in the towns of his parishioners, there is too much drunkenness on Indian festivity days in particular but the rest of the year they go well to the doctrine and have respect and obedience. In many parts the said Indians do not make wine of any kind. And this is what is known about this question". Translation by María de la Paz Solano Pérez.

Similarly is to be added the testimony given against the Indian Francisco in Suchipila (Juchipila, in the modern state of Zacatecas):

A la primera pregunta, dixo (*sic*) que lo que de ella sabe es que en este pueblo vive un yndio (*sic*) cantor viejo que se llama Francisco, en qual (*sic*) es público y notario que a más de veinte años que esta María, pero este testigo, no a (*sic*) visto cossa (*sic*) ninguna por donde pueda juzgar (*sic*) ser assi (*sic*): y que los días passados (*sic*) la prendió por esta publica voz y fama, y llegando a la averiguación no hallo testigos; y que ay (*sic*) en este pueblo algunas borracheras y algunas vezes (*sic*) hacen (*sic*) *pulque* de maiz, y es testigo, como alcalde mayor, lo castiga como puede para remediarlo; y esto sabe desta (*sic*) pregunta y no otra cossa (*sic*).³⁹



Fig. 9: "11. De cambujo e India produce Zambaigo" (José de Páez. C. 1780; Oil on canvas, 84.5 x 104 cm. Particular collection of Camilo Garza. Katzew 2004, 119)

39 Razo Zaragoza 2004, 147. "To the first question he said, that he knows about this is that in this village lives an old Indian singer called Francisco who is public and a notary, and who for more than twenty years is (with) Maria, but this witness, has not seen anything what he could judge to be wrong, and in the last days (he) has caught her in this public voice and fame, but arriving at the investigations did not find witnesses; and there is in this village some drunkenness and sometimes (they) make *pulque* of maize, and (he) is witness that the mayor punishes it as he can do it to correct it; and this is what is known about this question and no other thing" Translation by María de la Paz Solano Pérez.

A Turn on the Way Chosen, the Period of Change

For William B. Taylor the periods that comprised 1650–1800, were the most prosperous, or better said, the period was an era of adjustment in every area of indigenous society and for the *castas*. Despite the fact that the prehispanic upper classes had disappeared long ago, there was an inherited nobility with some influence and riches in the communities, a little bourgeoisie; there were also civil servants, clergymen, merchants, landlords, artists, etc., personalities shown by their new Spanish habits: the way they dress, work tools (particularly ploughs and knives), use livestock breeding, the religious cult, the Gregorian calendar, miscegenation, political institutions and other ones too; the most notorious cultural aspects of farmers were more European than precolumbines.

The populations that were reorganized at the end of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not resemble their pre-Hispanic ancestors or those that the new Spanish masters had tried to create as new European communities. Wherever these communities subsisted, they showed the traces of the most important changes in the region, in political relations and in economic activities. They maintained, however, a continuous basis of maize cultivation, of the identity of the rural community, and of certain customs which related them to a more distant past and which made a complex process of development rather than a persistent decline or destruction under pressure of the demands of the colony.⁴⁰

The guilds were an important element to keep the religious cycles in the communities; they established identities as groups, even special activities and profane expressions, channelling riches to funds. Communal property therefore, allowed the states to develop economic activities. The guilds had their own corn and agave plantations and this implies a production of their own beverages for the festivities. In the seventeenth century there is an allegory of the Virgin of the Remedios with a chief kneeled in front of her, shown between agaves. The allegory is a part of the cult and, at the same time, is part of the syncretism of femininity and adoration of Faith. Relationships between country state inhabitants and villages were not close and problems were raised and complaints advanced by the non-indigenous people who dominated all the commercial and administrative places in the Viceroyalty, as is clear from the testimony of the Hearing-magistrate (*oidor*) Juan Dávalos in the town of Mesticacán (in the northern part of the modern state of Jalisco) where he interviewed neighbour Alonso Garay who answered:

40 Taylor 1987, 40.

A la primera pregunta, dixo (que los indios) deste (*sic*) pueblo y desta (*sic*) jurisdicción, son negligentes en acudir a misa, en este pueblo, los indios de los pueblos circunvezinos (*sic*) acuden mal y vienen muy poco. Y en este pueblo se suele hacer vino *pulque* por los yndios (*sic*) y ay (*sic*) borracheras.⁴¹

The country state was shaped as an economic microsystem by itself during colonial times, provided for its people, but at the same time transatlantic commerce was reducing the regionalization of economic activities in the whole of New Spain. Domestic beverage production was very common during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, before the new laws were imposed. Also, the appearance of *pulquerías*, *tepacherías* and tavern retail business was promoted with the goal of bringing more people into these places with the aim of providing beverage outlets in the cities. Local *tianguis* offered exceptional places for the beverage trade and places of promised freedom for all who visited them, far away from village laws.



Fig. 10: "Pulquería en México, Origen" (Joaquín Antonio de Basarás, *Costumbres y estado presente de mexicanos y filipinos*, 1763, Hispanic Society of America, New York. Katzew 2004, 170)

41 Razo Zaragoza 2004, 98. "To the first question he said (that the Indians) from this town and jurisdiction are negligent about going to the service, that in this area the shameless indigenous from the small towns go in a bad way to the service and (only a) few times. And in this town *pulque* is prepared by the Indians and there is drunkenness." Translated by María de la Paz Solano Pérez.

Pulque, wines and, in the end, distillates, like *aguardiente* (“burning water”) or wine-*mezcal* tequila, became important parts of the Spanish-Indian trade. But ferments marketing – and consumption – contributed even more to social stratification in the villages of New Spain and the loss of the perception of the traditional connection between ritual and the sacred to drink. Also a factor was the selling of distillates: fortified wines and *aguardientes* were responsible for changing all related to ferments. Distillates, being introduced beverages, even imported from the Metropolis, were expensive and less associated with community feasts. Slowly it became forbidden to sell distillates to the indigenous people. The people used to measure devotion with levels of inebriation and not the value of the beverages *per se*, all this being misunderstood by Spanish authorities.

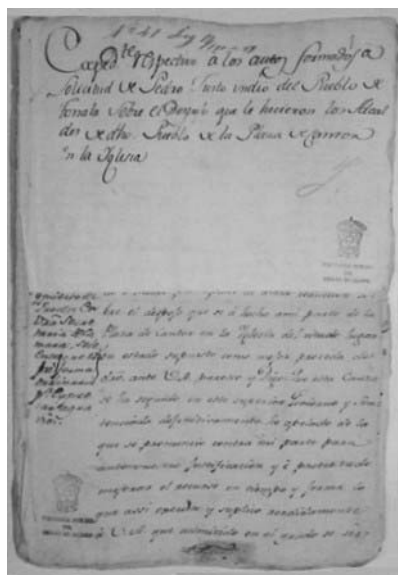


Fig. 11: File that contains the case of Pedro Justo, Indian from Tonalá village, about the deprival of his rights as a Singer in the church made by Mayors (photo by the author).⁴²

Changes occurring at the end of the seventeenth century were visible during the whole next century. Any kind of *casta* organization (civil, religious, etc.) became a reason to organize dances and drunkenness, resulting in fights, even murder, due to the fact that the use of physical violence to solve disagreements was

42 The picture is taken from the ARA-BPEJ. Civil Branch. Box 180. File 24. Progressive 2062. 19 Fojas. Year 1791.

incredibly common and sometimes the only way. The ancient regime constructed mechanisms of correction and coercion, to achieve the good performance of the social body. It punished the reoffender in the use and selling of fermented beverages, emphasizing whips, blows or banishment.

Atanacio Rivera, Yndio (sic) del Pueblo de Tonalá y cantor de aquella Parroquia, es Ebrio consuetudinario, en tanto grado que repetidas ocaciones (sic) lo he mandado cargar y llevar á (sic) la Carcel, por ver si así enmienda y no han sido bastante (sic) Las prisiones que aquel ha sufrido a aquel deje tan detestable vicio, antes á (sic) infante lo abraza con mas ahinco de modo que en diversos Domingos del año y días festivos a (sic) subido al Coro á (sic) officiar la Misa, y no lo ha verificado por no permitirselo la continua ebriedad aquel le asiste.

Atancio Rivera, Indian from the village of Tonalá and singer of that parish, is a habitual drunk, so many times I have carried him and taken him to jail. We would have seen in what way he mended his ways and has had enough of prisons and stops so detestable a vice. Instead he is negligent and clings harder, so that on several Sundays of the year and holidays when he has risen to the chair to officiate Mass, it is without success, because of the continuous drunkenness that overcomes him.⁴³

The main prohibitions of alcoholic beverages were essentially for moral reasons and to support the public order, but the regulation was also introduced for economic reasons, not directly administered by the Crown. All profits were assigned to individuals who were to care for the good habits or health of the Indians. One of the solutions involved was an increase of the tax on *pulque*. Increasing its price supposedly would result in consumption decrease and thus prevent disorders, crimes and sins, as well as generate substantial revenues. The Royal Administration would be favoured, as evident from public finance as opposite to the morality of the Catholic Church. As can be seen from Tab. 3, over a period of about 20 years, the tax on *pulque* was increased by 100%:

Year	Price	Quantity
1777	1 real un grano y 1/6	Arroba
	1 real 4 granos	
1778	1 real 5 granos	
1780	1 real 11 granos	
1784	2 reales 1 grano	

Tab. 3⁴⁴

43 ARA-BPEJ. Civil Branch. Box 180. File 24. Progressive 2062. Translated by María de la Paz Solano Pérez.

44 Source: Viqueira Albán 1987, 185.

Mention should be made regarding Royal Charter areas in the AGN with reports on the taxes that could be created for the *pulque* sector. This tax, it was said, could easily produce as much as 140.000–150.000 Pesos yearly.⁴⁵ This reference shows that traditional opposition to alcoholic beverages had taken a 180° to reflect changing goals. Forced to swing between permission and prohibition, the population turned to clandestine production and many consumers began to drink it.

The appearance of enlightenment ideas from Europe in New Spain allowed too many new scenes and philosophies with the purpose of promoting social, economic, and political progress. This change was also reflected in new governmental strategies, in administrative reforms, and state measures. Culturally, the relaxing of habits went along with a Frenchified way of life for the upper classes, and a rooting of popular culture in the *castas*. A new law proposed eradicating “harmful traditions” through a new educational system erasing bad habits in children, to eliminate the heritage of their parents.

Pulque	Indians and Castas	Repugnance, Savagery, Shamelessness
Wine	Spaniards	Elegance, Civility, Dignity

Tab. 4: Ways to drink, Spanish ideas about Indians and themselves

The Spanish colonies had a slow economic prosperity with the arrival of reforms concerning mining that was flourishing. Despite the good intentions and profits of the new laws equality was never applied to all areas of society. Constant epidemics, starvation, increasing vandalism and poverty reflected a widening gap between the novo-Spanish *castas*. In the words of Jean-Pierre Berthe, there was “grown without development”.⁴⁶ Poverty and hunger increased the disintegration process in rural communities, provoking a mass exodus to the cities of “citadine rabble”.

White *pulque* (without additives) was the only beverage allowed by the Crown because it was consumed in a religious context by purely indigenous people but also by Mestizos, poor Spaniards and the rest of the *castas* as the cheapest drink. Even with all the restrictions, *pulquerías*, like other places for alcoholic beverages, were spaces for socialization (sometimes for confrontation) and catharsis for all social classes.

45 Viqueira Albán 1987, 173. Cf. AGN, Cédulas Reales. Taylor 1987, 76-92; Lozano Armendáres 1995, 94f.

46 Cf. Viqueira Albán 1987, 16.

In them big parties with food, music and dancing known as “*Jamaicas*”, “*coloquios*” and “*posadas*” (the last two held near to Christmas), when the moods were heating up, ended in fights and quarrels. Rich Spaniards, fond of drinking, risked losing their decency in such places, exclusively designed for low social classes.

In the towns, the number of *pulquerías* was reduced, monitored and restricted as tolerance spaces: no seats or distractions were allowed, there were reduced schedules for sales, but this resulted in an intake of larger quantities in reduced periods of time. Their customers began to search for other kinds of places to socialize and drink. Thus sites opened clandestinely. There were more *pulquerías*, *tepacherías*, *chinguiritos* selling fermented and distilled beverages.

When the alcoholic levels in fermented beverages are low, an intake in high quantities still produces an inebriating effect, also true if the beverage is mixed with some catalyser or fortifier.

Pulque was the basis of a great quantity of mixed drinks. Despite the prohibitions that periodically the King sent against the use of additives, the peasant merchants with special permissions could sell *Cuapatle*. In 1686, only few months after, the King had orders that “any kind of root or another ingredient could be added to *pulque*, which make it stronger, hotter or tastier,” the viceroy was granting special permissions to Indians who were asked for an authorization to sell *pulque* with *Cuapatle* in Mexico City.⁴⁷

A great list of ferments was known before European contact. Many of them were made with white *pulque*, mixed up with fruits, seeds, roots or weeds.

Sangre de Conejo	Vino Tepemé	Tecuín
Nochole	Cerveza	Tesgüino
Oztotzi	Chicha	Sidra
Quauchan	Chiquito	Vino de Caña
Tolonce o Tolonche	Chuámico o Chuanue	Tepache de ciruelas pasadas
Charape de Michoacán	Obo o Jobo	Tepache de Timbiriche (Tumbiriche)
Charángue	Tepache Jobo	Vino de palmas silvestres
Copalotel o Copalotile	Peyote	Zagardúa, Ponche de Sidra o Zagardica
Coyole	Ostoché	Zambúmbia
Guarapo	Pozole	Ztizitli
Tecolio	Quebranta-huesos	
Tepache	Sedencho	

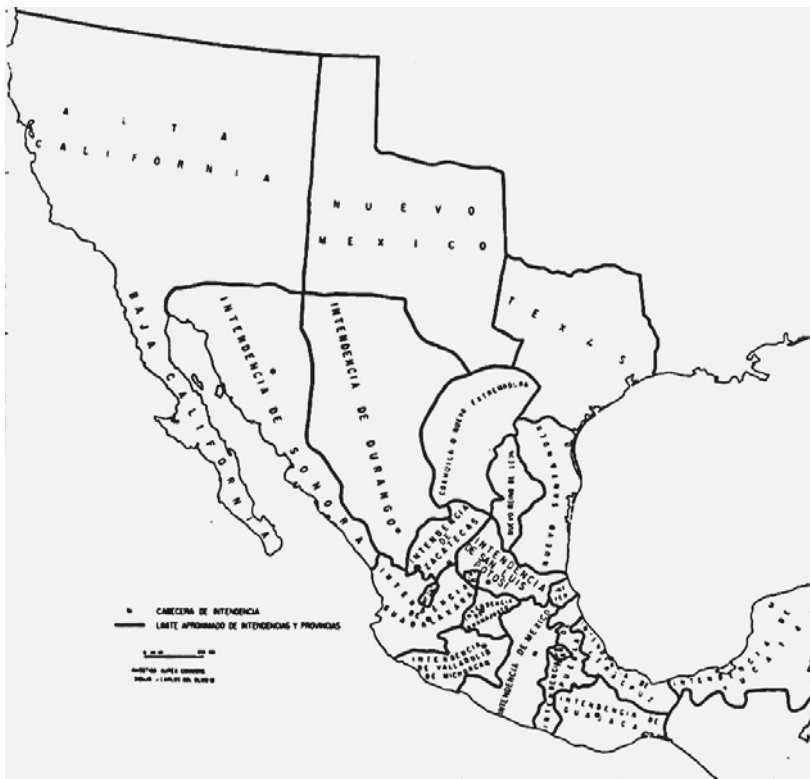
Tab. 5: Fermented beverages of the New Spain⁴⁸

47 AGN. Indians Branch 29. Files 30, 193, 201, 272, 281, 305. Cf. Taylor 1987, 89.

48 Source: Lozano Armendáñez 1995, 20-24, 239-243.

The Crossing Roads of Two Directions: Guadalajara

Guadalajara City consolidated itself as the capital of the New Galicia kingdom in 1560. It became the seat of a bishopric and of the royal Audience, thus strengthening as a political, economic, educative, and administrative centre and as a point of connection between the mining regions of the Northwest and Mexico City. From the sixteenth century until the nineteenth century, it had a constant and significant development in producing our great land as a “real hinterland”.



Map. 3: Intendancies and Internal Provinces of the New Spain ⁴⁹

The image that Guadalajara projected in the eighteenth century was that of a Mercantilist city where were located big as well as well-supplied warehouses distributing imported products from Europe or Asia (via san Blas' Port) in an area

49 Source: Commons de la Rosa 1993, 203.

This is how water was brought from Los Colomos and Mexicaltzingo springs, and from the shore of the San Juan de Dios and Atemajac rivers, no longer the water of the Toluquilla located 10km south approximately was taken.

By 1798, Guadalajara had 30.000 inhabitants⁵² so hydraulic supply was insufficient and expensive. Constantly there was shortage and also pollution in the bodies of waters due the lack of maintenance and poor sanitation. How to sustain water supply?

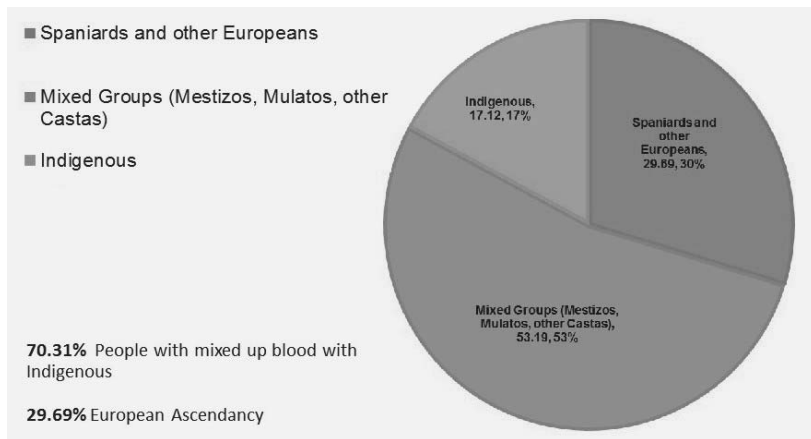


Fig. 12: Ethnical Composition of Guadalajara in 1793 (Graphic by the author)⁵³

There was a resort to tax collection in all those cities under Guadalajara's jurisdiction, amounting to 18,432 Pesos, 4 Reales and 6 Granos. Of course this sum was not enough. But the appearance of new technologies and ideas changed the way of thinking in the region. With the Bourbon reforms and the limiting of enlightenment ideas, the social spread of the population was restricted. Ethnic diversity had been an element predominantly determining social inequality, for example in Mexico City, but eighteenth century-Guadalajara's society insisted on internal differences wide-spread in all common areas. For example, there was a way of dressing according to occupation and class, and their socialization, meaning that the distribution of space by social class depended on the practices involved allowing the construction of celebrations and culture in the guilds and *casta* groups, including parallel labour duties non-organized by authorities such as dances and card games, and bullfighting (its popular version was accompanied

52 Cf. Escobar Hernández 2012, 73f.

53 Source: Castañeda and Gómez 2000, 59, based on Menéndez Valdés 1980.

with drunkenness and sometimes fights). Social composition showed *castas* and a wide variety of economic levels. As Jaime Olveda says, in the last quarter of eighteenth century New Galicia's capital took up the arrival of immigrants from neighbouring provinces and European cities.

The population percentage of European origin owned the commercial monopoly in the whole western region of the New Spain viceroyalty, a fact that strengthened as a cultural parameter including for *castas*, even if they belonged to a guild, opening a wide gap between “decent people” and the “masses”. Why mention this? To begin with, new generations who belonged to the upper class had a work, business and entrepreneurial mentality, provoking a commercial upturn and a powerful oligarchy.⁵⁴ Thus, the preference for non-indigenous beverages also resulted.

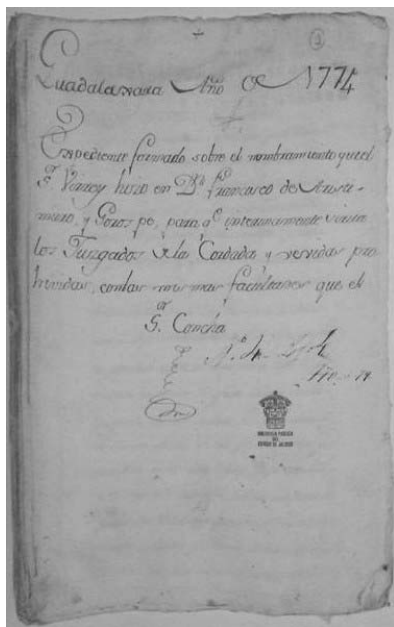


Fig. 13: File concerning to the appointment of Francisco de Aristimuro y Gorospe, as an Interim of the Acordada Court and Forbidden beverages, made by the Viceroy (Photo by the author)⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Cf. Olveda 2006, 21.

⁵⁵ This picture is taken from the ARA-BPEJ. Civil Branch. Box 180. File 6. Progressive 934. 36 Fojas. Year 1774.

Despite the fact that the production, sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages was forbidden in the whole of New Spain, the development of the distillation of beverages in New Galicia began between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, verified in registry books stating that when the ARA-BPEJ was opened it was a "Forbidden beverages court", one that monitored and punished all those who produced alcohols.

[...] Y respecto a que el (sic) Juzgado de Bebidas Prohibidas (sic), lo establecido ultimamente en dies (sic) y ocho de diciembre de mil Setesientos (sic) setenta y dos se tubo (sic) por conveniente (sic) conniesse (sic) con el desta (sic) Acordada para mas bien lograr su extincion y con los individuos de este Zelar (sic) y Critar (sic) sus fabricas, y con expendios y que conviene siga con este Metodo por lo que la experiencia ha acreditado.⁵⁶

How then did the transition from natural ferments to distillates occur? And why? The reason was the creation of a monopoly for wine-*mezcal* in Guadalajara. As Teresa Lozano Armendáres says,⁵⁷ in the whole of the viceroyalty, *mezcal* in the form of *chinguirito* was forbidden by the Crown, but in the middle of the seventeenth century the president of the Royal Audience, Juan Canseo Quiñones, decreed the urgent need to create a Royal monopoly to produce a reliable tax collection and thus allocate funds to the needy infrastructure of Guadalajara city: namely the construction of water conducts for the city and the construction of a Royal palace. When the monopoly was created, all prohibitions affecting beverages in the area were relaxed, which was the better way to change something harmful to something beneficial for the same society that had previously forbidden it through production licenses. *Alcabalas* (taxes) were insufficient and even the crown could not pay. For revenue purposes, distillates were favoured over natural ferments.

For this reason, there was stipulated in a Royal Charter granted by Queen Mariana of Austria on September 7th of 1673 the following allowing the use of

[...] dicho vino fe Cocos, y Mezcale, usado con moderación, no era nocivo, sino antes saludable, y útil a los Indios, y a las demás personas, que lo usan, y que por haberse prohibido su trafico, y consumo en aquel Reino habían inventado los Indios

56 ARA-BPEJ, Civil Branch. Box 84. File 6 Progressive 934. "In that regard the Forbidden Beverages Court, established ultimately the tenth and eighth of December of 1772, had by convenience to know this agreement to achieve its extinction, and with the members of it keeping a watchful eye (on this)... and remove them from their fabrics and shops so that this method should be followed as experience has shown." Translated by María de la Paz Solano Pérez.

57 Lozano Armendáres 1995, 28.

diferentes bebidas, que hacían de cañas, dulces, maíces, y otros géneros, las quales (sic) habían ocasionado peste, y enfermedades, y causadoles (sic) perjudicial embriagues (sic), de que habían seguido lastimosos efectos, y que para veberla (sic), se retiraban a los Montes, de que se habían originado muchos, y graves géneros de pecados, y que siendo imposible remediarlos totalmente se debía permitir la bebida [...].⁵⁸

Wine-*mezcal* tequila started to be considered as a cultural product from Mestizo and Creole hispanized societies. Distillates were concentrated in the western areas and lowlands of New Galicia. As with the other beverages, attempts to legalize them were for the purpose of creating economic gains. *Aguardiente* from Catalonia was then the only legal distillate and was not enough for consumption, because it was imported in low quantities.

Luna Zamora comments,⁵⁹ the wine-*mezcal* tequila production despite being hand-crafted exhibited three basic characteristics: the first is that it did not need much investment, thus the profits were really huge. The second is that it was a consolidated rural space under the Hacienda system and guilds, allowing specialized monocultures. Third, there was a market securing, mainly linked to North-western mining enters adjoining to Guadalajara's intendency (being the only one with a Royal permission for distillate production). In this area two points more could be added: the fourth, due to social composition and Europeanized habits, the preference to distil was increasing leaving behind the ferments. And fifth, the production and distributions of fermented beverages was limited to territories extending just a few leagues and preservation was for a period of time, a couple of days. By way of comparison, a distillate could be preserved for years and the alcoholic level still remains the same. Flavour could be even better.

The Amatitán region arose as a production centre of wine-*mezcal* because it is located in a well-irrigated valley and communicated with commerce and distribution routes. Beverages were distributed mainly to Bolaños, Zacatecas and Guadalajara.

58 AGI. México Branch 2332 Real Academia de la Historia Tomo C 5373. Cf. Jiménez Vizcarra 2009, 39-43. "[...] Said coconut wine and *mezcal*, used with moderation, are not dangerous, instead healthy and useful for Indians, and for all other people who use them and because, when its traffic and consumption in that Kingdom forbidden, the Indians have been creating different beverages made with sweet canes, corn and other sorts, which has ocasioned plagues and diseases, and has caused them harmful drunkenness that has resulted from the pitiful effects from drinking these liquors, and through drinking them, consumers retired to the mountains and originated many and grave sorts of sins and it is impossible to remedy them totally, the drink should be allowed [...]." Translated by María de la Paz Solano Pérez.

59 Luna Zamora 1991, 35f.



Fig. 14: The Justice Palace and seat of the Audience of Guadalajara, today is the Palace of Government of the State of Jalisco, was built with tariffs gotten from taxes on the production of wine-*mezcal* tequila (photo by the author)

In 1795, the entry of wine-*mezcal* into Guadalajara city provided 810 Pesos to the monopoly. This quantity was intended to cover a part of the expenses of building the Palace of Government and a water network that met the needs of the city's inhabitants.⁶⁰

Otherwise, production of distillates provided very substantial profits.

Distilled beverages consumption at the end of colonial époque seems to have been centred where populations cultivated sugar cane, but was certainly not unknown for central Mexico and Oaxaca, particularly in populations that had markets. In 1778, in the mining areas alone, it was estimated that 80.000 barrels of *chiringuito* (cheap domestic cane alcohol), 20.000 barrels of Spanish brandy, 10,000 barrels of anise liqueur, and 1.000 barrels of Spanish liqueur were consumed.⁶¹

The great labour journeys of the *castas* in the land, in the workshops and mines, caused moral misery that forced people to take refuge in amusements and even vices to escape their reality, even if only for a moment. High alcohol demand shown

60 Luna Zamora 1991, 43.

61 Taylor 1987, 90. Cf. Biblioteca Nacional de México 1361 Folios 96-97.

both in the census of 1784 and in various criminal proceedings against clandestine producers and traders of cane burning-water, make us think, however, that it was produced as a *chinguirito* in small stills installed against the law in every place where sugar cane was cultivated. The officials of the Forbidden Beverages Court and from the *Acordada* argued in the middle of eighteenth century that was practically impossible to control distilled cane alcohol because the distillation equipment was so very simple and easy to hide.⁶²

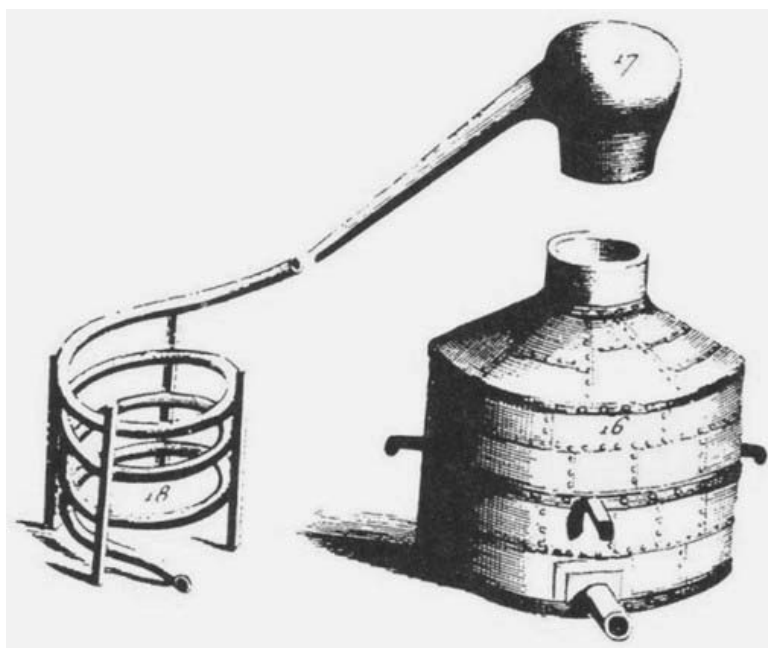


Fig. 15: Design of a still or snake, brought from Europe for elaboration of *aguardiente*⁶³

This is why alcoholic beverages production always had to be in an unstable position between clandestine and forbidden to be permissible. The prohibitive reasons against producing distilled beverages in New Spain were an undertone, as well as the great economic losses of Spanish merchants related to imported beverages. Even as reduced as the commercial market in the colonies was at the time, local producers were a serious competitive threat. Wine-*mezcal* tequila

62 Taylor 1987, 90. Cf. Biblioteca Nacional de México 1361 Folios 96-97.

63 Archivo General de Indias. Ingenios y Muestras, 187. Source: Lozano Armendares 1997, 430.

being a large productive line was affected by new laws resulting from Bourbon reforms.

However, in 1785 the viceroy Matías Gálvez, has gotten Charles III to sign a Charter forbidding the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages in New Spain, trying with this to protect the sale of peninsular burning-water. In 1795 this prohibition was annulled as it did not reach its objective, but instead considerably decreased tax collections by an estimated 130.000 Pesos that would have been used the building the Palace of Government (of Guadalajara) whose costs were provided by the wine-*mezcal* monopoly.⁶⁴

After the Independence in 1810 and to reflect the Cadiz Constitution's laws, a freedom of commerce was promulgated in 1812. For that reason there was a proliferation of wineries, taverns, *tepacherías*. In them drinks were mixed more inebriating than simple *pulque*, which was in short supply during the wars of independence. *Pulque* became a source of income for the royal army, which blocked all access to this ferment for the cities.⁶⁵ After Independence, in a new independent Mexico, all politics had to be changed in accelerated ways regarding beverages shops. Many *pulquerías* and taverns were re-opened, but were now transferred to the city periphery, that is, so relegated.

The Final Stretch: Conclusions

In comparison with the territories of New Spain, in the thirteen British colonies in North America, drunkenness was free and could be achieved through the exchange of furs, or commercial exchange of some commodities like blankets or guns. But, by contrast, what happened in the Spanish territories immediately was not the emergence of such exchanges but a quick desacralization of alcohol among natives. The socio-cultural context never entirely disappeared but uncontrolled ingestion increased considerably.

European perception of alcohol was in some way parallel to that of the indigenous, because in Communion, wine (alcohol) represents God's blood. The problem was that God was not the same on both sides. Hence the confrontation. Slavery, the *encomienda* system,⁶⁶ and sudden demographic decrease

64 Luna Zamora 1991, 43.

65 Cf. Viqueira 1987, 216.

66 "*Encomienda*" is derived from "*encomender*" (to entrust). It was a legal system by which the Spanish Crown tried to define the status of the indigenous Indian population and awarded Spanish conquerors a specific amount of indigenous Indians as work force. The *encomienda*

pushed the Indians to alcoholism. The consumption of alcohol increased in towns where Spanish protectionism was more immediate.

The arrival of innovative technologies during the colonial era allowed the creation of beverages with a higher alcohol level. Also, consumption of ferments was pushed off onto the lower classes, to those with no money to buy imported beverages. At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century came new technologies, ideas, wines, distillates and beers. These were preferred by rich people, securing the idea that popular ferments were something for the tastelessness of poor people. The consumption of ferments as a part of ritual and religion sank completely into oblivion for populations in the urban centres during the colonial period. In the case of New Galicia, it became a strategy to use something that was always forbidden to generate earning to meet the needs of the city.

Beverage distribution for the area that corresponds to western Mexico is still going forward in the same areas, with the same aims, in the main, for festivities in the indigenous communities, having some variants for Mestizo groups. Rituality depends on festivity to celebrate especially dedicated events connected to rain, harvests, fertility and the hunting seasons.⁶⁷ In Western Mexico consumption of fermented beverages never disappeared nor was it replaced by the use of distillates. Today there are projects to provide incentives for the production, conservation and consumption of popular ferments because of their beneficial properties for the human organism and because of the sustainability of their production for communities.

The Path is open...

was a grant from the Crown to particular individuals who obtained special rights over Indian communities. Although this system did not include grants of land, in practice the receivers (*encomenderos*) quickly gained control over the land of the Indians. They were permitted to exact tribute from the Indians in gold, in kind, or in labour and were required to protect them, instruct them in the Christian faith, and suppress potential resistance against the Spanish conquerors. And, although originally intended to reduce the abuses of forced labour in the New World shortly after its discovery, in practice it became a form of enslavement.

67 Cf. Lumholtz 1986, Part I, 248-253, 324-348; Diguët 1992, 195-229.

Equivalences and Abbreviations Used

ARA-BPEJ. Archivo de la Real Audiencia. Biblioteca Pública del Estado de Jalisco, México

AGI. Archivo General de Indias. (Sevilla, España).

AGN. Archivo General de la Nación de México.

1 Arroba = 11.5 Kilogram = 25 Pounds = 1/9 of Quintal

1 Carga of *Pulque* = 18 Arrobas = 450 Cuartillos of *Pulque*

1 Cuartillo of *Pulque* = 0.5 Litre of *Pulque*

1 Galón = 3.785 Litre

1 Peso = 8 Reales

1 Real of Silver = 1 Tomín = 12 Grains

1 Bushel of Corn = 55 Liters of Corn = 48 Kilograms of Corn

1 Vara = 0.84 Metre

1 Legua = 5.573 Kilometre

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