Introduction

A Social History of Books

When the Peruvian scholar José Eusebio Llano Zapata travelled to Spain in the middle of the eighteenth century, he remarked on the difference between the book markets in a letter to the Archbishop of Charcas: 'The publications of Elzevir, Gryphius, and Stefanos, which today can hardly be found in Europe; there is no market, thrift store, or junk shop in our America, principally in Lima, which would not sell them'.[1] Llano Zapata highlighted the contrast between the two markets, and to him it was back home, in the Viceroyalty of Peru, not in Spain, where the titles of the celebrated European printing families were readily available. In his luggage from Lima he had even packed two books, originally published in the German city of Mainz, which he believed to be very rare. He concluded his observations by stating that '[o]f Italian, French, and Portuguese books, for almost a century now, there are so many that have been brought to these countries [in Spanish America] that today […] through the trade, these have become known to the American erudite men and also to […] women'.[2] The Peruvian scholar who had travelled across the Atlantic and had experienced both places clearly judged the colonial book

[1] '*Las ediciones de los Elzevirs* [Dutch publishing family], *Gryfios* [German printer in Venice, Italy and Lyon, France] *y Estefanos* [probably Stefano della Bella, printer in Florence, Italy], *que hoy apenas se encuentran en la Europa, no hay baratillo, ropavejería o tendejón en nuestra América, principalmente en Lima, donde no se encuentren*'. Llano Zapata, 'Carta … al Ilustrísimo … arzobispo de los Charcas [1758]', 76.

[2] '*De libros italianos, franceses y portugueses ha casi un siglo que son tantos los que se conducen a aquellos países que hoy* […] *por este comercio se han hecho comunes a los eruditos americanos, pasando también su cultivo a las mujeres* […]'. Llano Zapata, 'Carta … al Ilustrísimo … arzobispo de los Charcas [1758]', 78.

market favourably, as bearing comparison with Europe. In characterising the trade, he emphasised the wide variety of available books, their different publication sites, as well as the various locations of book sales in the capital of Lima. In addition, he outlined a broad readership composed of both men and women, conveying the impression that books were generally available at the time. In the following decades, more and more people in colonial society gained access to locally printed and imported books.

This is a social history of books in late colonial Peru during the Age of Enlightenment. By tracing print publications as commodities that circulated in the specific social setting of the Viceroyalty of Peru during the last decades of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, *A Colonial Book Market* studies these publications as material objects, in quotidian use. To date, we have no comprehensive framework to analyse the scale, geography, and practices of either local production or the import trade, which together account for the volume of distribution and acquisition of books on the colonial market. Much attention has been paid to the circulation of single political writings containing revolutionary ideas, and to prohibited books, which, however, were owned by very few people. While research has concentrated on the distinguished libraries of erudite individuals and illustrious authorities, the interplay between print production, import trade, and the circulation of books in the Age of Enlightenment, as designed for broad parts of the population, mostly eludes us.

The Enlightenment, at the same time an idea, a movement, and a global project, characterised a whole era that had started in the early eighteenth century. As a key term of the age, used and discussed by contemporaries themselves both in Spanish America and in Europe, the Enlightenment is a contested term of scholarship that needs to be understood in its specific contexts. Colonial power relations shaped the rise of printed words, a critical component in the Age of Enlightenment. Though the printing press did not serve as an agent of revolutionary change in Peru, the profound impact of the expanding print culture transformed daily life with enlightened tendencies. Among other things, reading material encouraged self-study, communicated new ideas, stimulated critical debates, and conveyed practical knowledge. To appreciate the Enlightenment in the Viceroyalty of Peru, and Spanish America more broadly, we need to consider not only celebrated European authors, in particular the prominent Spanish authors of enlightened thought, such as Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes, Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, and Fray Benito Jerónimo Feijóo, who were all readily available on the colonial book market, but moreover the new practices of access to and uses of print. This study will

not focus on particular authors or single texts, but instead on printers, traders, and book possessors who made use of the Enlightenment as a print practice in which many participated. Considering diverse modes of reception and popular uses of print in Peruvian cities, this study reveals how a larger mass of printed commodities than ever before was available to a diverse customer group.

Against the division between a small, lettered elite and the majority of illiterate people in Peru, *A Colonial Book Market* attempts to show how ordinary individuals from various backgrounds accessed print and possessed books. While, of course, not all reading matter contained practical knowledge in an enlightened sense but provided, for instance, entertainment, religious meditation, or royal propaganda, the period was characterised by a new and growing participation in print culture. *A Colonial Book Market* weaves two claims into a central argument. Its first claim is that, by import and through Limeño production, the book market was quantitatively large and qualitatively diverse. It was from the 1760s onwards that workshops in Lima and transoceanic imports supplied the Peruvian market with unprecedented quantities of print publications, including books, leading to a diversity of reading material. The second claim concerns the locations of printing and selling, and unveils an integrated trade and everyday contact zone in the marketplace where customers of different backgrounds encountered books, exchanging and handing the items on to others. Through this composite book market in late colonial Peru, which is set out in the two claims, more people than ever before had access to print and, by this, participated in the Enlightenment project. This is not to say that print was a mass medium or to deny that the book market was controlled mainly by the Spanish-speaking elements of society. It is to say, however, that despite its limits and the restrictions in place, by the late eighteenth century print publications were a daily commodity within the reach of many men and women living in Lima and other parts of the viceroyalty.

Peru offers a particularly interesting site to investigate the role of books in colonial society. In colonial contexts, and especially in the process of imperial expansion and consolidation, the printing press had turned into a critical tool for colonial administrators and others that was often contested and used for own ends.[3] Forming an important part of

[3] For the context of print media and colonialism, see Ballantyne, 'What Difference Does Colonialism Make'. With a focus on the periodical press, Hunter and James, 'Introduction: Colonial Public Spheres'.

the Spanish realm, the Viceroyalty of Peru was officially not a colony, yet the development of print culture and its book market depended directly on Spain.[4] Its circumstances were marked by a particular historical setting: a typographical tradition in the capital reaching back as far as 1584, the distance from other book trading centres, its longstanding trade and political connections with the European market, and its highly stratified and diverse society with unequal access to education. In this setting, Peruvian readers partook in the print culture of their time to an extent that is comparable to other sites, such as Western Europe and British America. Unlike other forms of cultural production, books were especially mobile objects, printed both in Lima and abroad, traded across borders, marketed in the cities at various sites, and sold, resold, or passed on to someone else who was interested, transgressing social divisions in the process. Following such itineraries, this social history of reading material in Peru is a contribution to acknowledging the book as a medium in societies that are considered peripheral to the developments of both print culture and the Enlightenment. Against an increasing reductionism in Enlightenment studies that limits the field to certain print genres, geographical areas, and classes of readers, *A Colonial Book Market* offers a different approach by integrating new modes of making and consuming print.

Lima, with the old name City of Kings (*Ciudad de los Reyes*), was an attraction on the South American continent. As the high court of the Spanish crown and seat of the viceroyalty, the *audiencia* capital presided over a vast region through the centralisation of power: the Viceregal Palace, the old University of San Marcos, archiepiscopal institutions, and the courthouses were all located in the bustling city that formed the political centre.[5] A considerable number of professionals, producing texts and interested in books, had made Lima a suitable place to set up and run printing businesses.[6] After Mexico, where a press had existed since 1539, Lima was the second place with a printing press in the Americas,

[4] Although Peru had the status of a viceroyalty, in the following I will use the term 'colonial' to highlight the structure of dependency. On the terminology and the relationship to Spain, see Burkholder, 'Spain's America'.

[5] For a general survey of Lima's history, see Günther Doering and Lohmann Villena, *Lima*. On how colonial Lima became a 'most modern city', see Osorio, *Inventing Lima*. On population and commerce in eighteenth-century Peru, see Pérez Cantó, *Lima en el siglo XVIII*.

[6] For a study of intellectual life in Peru, see the classic Barreda Laos, *Vida intelectual*. For Lima's Court, Church, and the university as privileged places in the lettered city, see Guibovich Pérez, 'La ciudad letrada'. For general considerations on printing places, see the 'Geography of the Book' in Febvre and Martin, *The Coming of the Book*, 170, 207, 208.

continuously operating from 1584 on.[7] Until late into the eighteenth century, it was the only place of continuous printing production on the whole continent – apart from individual publication enterprises by the Jesuits at other sites. Established about a century after the first workshops in Europe and pre-dating activities in the British American realms by half a century,[8] printing in the Peruvian capital had a longstanding typographic tradition. Through its position of power, Lima had developed into the 'lettered city' par excellence.[9]

The meaning of the book in colonial Peru connects extensively with the act of alphabetic writing – in a society largely based on orality.[10] The gradual spread of literacy transformed society's practices through standardising forms of expression and the emergence of a single common language: Spanish, which however was not the language of the majority, who spoke Quechua or other indigenous languages. The topic of writing and power in Spanish America has been famously addressed by Angel Rama's concept of the 'lettered city', which has defined the colonial space as highly hierarchical, largely due to a network of signs and literacy in which only a few participated.[11] Though literacy was an essential prerequisite for the very small colonial elite, it was not their exclusive domain.[12] While print culture was no longer restricted to the upper classes alone – as *A Colonial Book Market* contends – books circulated above all in urban spaces. Lima's position within the book market was unparalleled due to both the printing workshops and the connection to

[7] Medina, 'La imprenta en Lima'; Rodríguez Buckingham, 'The Establishment, Production, and Equipment'; Wagner, 'La imprenta'. Later printing sites followed, although some of them did not operate permanently: Manila (1593), Puebla (1642), Guatemala (1660), Paraguay (1705, only briefly), Havana (1707), Oaxaca (1720), Santafé de Bogotá (1738), Quito (1760), Santiago de Chile (1776), Buenos Aires (1780), and Caracas (1808).

[8] From 1639 on, a press operated in Cambridge, Massachusetts: Martin, 'North America and Transatlantic Book Culture',262.

[9] The theory of power being centralised in the cities, as in Angel Rama's concept from 1984, became most stimulating and is here referred to in order to acknowledge the relevance of literacy in urban spaces: Rama, *La ciudad letrada*. For theoretical considerations on the concept, see, for example, Adorno, 'La "Ciudad letrada" y los discursos'.

[10] Compare Chapter 1 and the discussion of literacy in Peru. For a criticism and an alternative history of writing in pre-Columbian and early Spanish America, see Boone and Mignolo (eds.), *Writing without Words*.

[11] Rama, *La ciudad letrada*. Along the same line, about a 'learned fortress' of privileged intellectuals in early colonial New Spain, Chocano Mena, *La fortaleza docta*.

[12] With reference to Rama's concept but claiming broader participation in the 'lettered city', Adorno, 'La "Ciudad letrada" y los discursos'; Burns, 'Dentro de la ciudad letrada'; Jouve Martín, *Esclavos de la ciudad letrada*; Dueñas, *Indians and Mestizos*; Dueñas, 'The Lima Indian Letrados'; Rappaport and Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered City*.

TABLE 0.1 *Population of Peru in some major cities with its ethno-social distribution as counted in colonial terms in 1795.*

Number of inhabitants in 1795	Lima	Arequipa	Cuzco	Trujillo	Total Peru
Spaniards	38%	62%	68%	14%	13%
Indians	8%	14%	28%	39%	58%
Mestizos	9%	14%	0%	13%	22%
Free Blacks	19%	7%	3%	21%	4%
Slaves	26%	3%	1%	13%	4%
Total	52,645	36,431	24,842	11,908	1,115,207

Note: Percentage calculated from numbers cited in Fisher, *Government and Society*, 251–253, Appendix 2, based on AGI, Indiferente General 1525. Rounding errors in sums have been corrected. Different numbers, based on other categories, are offered by the *Guía* from 1793, citing the census the year before: Unanue, *Guía política, eclesiástica y militar … 1793*, 1, 77, 94–95, 117. For a criticism of the population data drawn from the colonial census counts, Browning and Robinson, 'The Origin and Comparability'. On the long-term development of Lima's population, compiling data from 1570 (12,000 inhabitants) to 1876 (more than 101,000 inhabitants), see Haitin, *Late Colonial Lima*, 193–197.

the harbour at Callao. Protected by a monopoly, the harbour built the economic gateway for trade in a wide array of products, among them books, stimulating commercial life in the capital from which redistribution was organised to other major cities where, apart from individual consignments to rural areas, the trade concentrated. Among the major cities in the viceroyalty were Arequipa, Cuzco, and Trujillo, which were also primary places of book consumption. As ceremonial, administrative, and social urban centres, the cities experienced important commercial and cultural activity. Their leading role as trade centres led to a comparatively large and diverse population (Table 0.1).

Not only did the census of the time state the number of inhabitants, it also measured the lineage categories of the mixed society. In general Spaniards, counted as Iberian-born *peninsulares* and American-born *criollos*, dominated in the cities (although Trujillo was an exception). Ethnicity and purity of blood (*limpieza de sangre*), kinship and gender, good manners and economic resources constituted the principal determinants of social status in the Viceroyalty of Peru. They also defined a person's education and occupation. Yet towards the end of the eighteenth century, cross-ethnic contacts increasingly subverted the normative boundaries that colonial authorities tried to implement. Due to family relations between Indians, Spaniards, and Africans, ethnic distinctions were diluted, and their common offspring, called *castas,* were further

differentiated by classification terms like *mestizo*, *zambo*, or *cuarterón*.[13] This was remarkable especially for travellers who came to Peru, such as the Spanish scientist Hipólito Ruiz on his voyage between 1777 and 1788, who described the mixed population in harsh terms.[14] Against the strict framework of socio-ethnic categories, its permeability or subversion formed part of daily business through legal and cultural negotiations. Scholarship has shown the fluidity of colonial caste categories, for example with exogamous preferences in marriage patterns, especially for indigenous and *mestizo* groups, or the elegant clothing of slaves.[15] With its hierarchical and diverse society in addition to Lima's longstanding typographical tradition, late colonial Peru offers a singular case to investigate the reach and scope of reading material in a colonial context.

Contemporaries described these social changes in Peru, sometimes even manifested them in print. Expressing themselves mainly as members of a shared Hispanic cultural community, authors followed Spanish literary models, creating a culture that very much followed that of the metropole.[16] Especially in the capital, debates and polemics raged against the new customs and many changes in the colonial order. After the devastating earthquake of 1746, Lima had experienced a resurrection with an expanding urban topography inhabited by a fast-growing population.[17] According to a benevolent contemporary article in the periodical *Mercurio Peruano*, Lima was prosperous, covering an expansive area, home to many, and offering various goods and new resources, which led to prosperity and the 'common good' (*felicidad comun*) for the middle social strata: artisans, petty merchants, and small traders.[18]

[13] For a contemporary explanation of social stratification, see the article 'Carta remitida à la Sociedad, que publica con algunas Notas', *Mercurio Peruano*, no. 344, 20 April 1794, 259–262. For a comprehensive overview of Lima's society, see Pérez Cantó, *Lima en el siglo XVIII*, 73–105. On social demarcation in colonial Peru, see Cahill, 'Colour by Numbers'; Mörner, 'Economic Factors and Stratification'; Bronner, 'Elite Formation'; Campbell, 'Racism without Race'.

[14] Ruiz, 'Faces of All Colors'.

[15] Haitin, *Late Colonial Lima*, 284–305; Walker, *Exquisite Slaves*. See also the summary of scholarship by Earle, 'The Pleasures of Taxonomy', 428–433.

[16] Higgins, *Lima: A Cultural and Literary History*, 91–95.

[17] For Lima's status in the mid-eighteenth century and the reconstruction of the city after the earthquake according to the Bourbon reform programme, see Walker, *Shaky Colonialism*. For the subsequent pedagogical endeavour of the Bourbon viceroys, see Ramón, 'Urbe y orden'.

[18] 'Reflexiones históricas y políticas sobre el Estado de la población de esta Capital, que se acompaña por suplemento', *Mercurio Peruano* no. 10, 02 March 1791, 95–96. For a description of the well-off middle class beneath the elite, see Brading, 'The City'.

Concurrently, but in a far more sarcastic tone, Esteban Terralla y Landa wrote about urban social chaos in his book *Lima por dentro y fuera*, published on a press in Lima in 1797. His city criticism in verse targeted the inhabitants, in particular the fraudulent customs of women, who were disguised behind a *tapada* veil or mantle, and the city's reconstructed architecture in danger of collapsing, which illustrated the moral downfall of the place.[19] At the centre of debate, publishing, and trade, the Peruvian capital was a cultural hub for some and a city in decay for others. Print publications served as a medium of expression to describe and judge late colonial developments and generally to communicate. While, in the middle of the twentieth century, Irving A. Leonard still called the Lima of 1583 a 'leading centre of transplanted Spanish culture in the New World', research has shown how after more than two hundred years of entanglement between native and European culture, objects and practices had been fully appropriated, repeatedly diversified, and unpredictably enriched.[20] In the colonial context, the printing craft and the book had been integrated into the practices of the everyday life of Peruvian cities.

Books were only one of the various coexisting media for memory and communication, but they were the dominant one from the early years of colonial rule. Before the Spaniards brought alphabetic writing and the book, the Inca had their own system of recording information with the *khipu*, a knotted cord device. A drawing by Guaman Poma de Ayala depicts an administrator holding a *khipu* in one hand and a book in the other, representing the coexistence of the two types of media (Figure 0.1). Besides the introduction of alphabetic writing and the distribution of books, the accounting method provided by the *khipu* subsisted above all in rural Andean regions during the colonial time and beyond.[21]

[19] Terralla y Landa, *Lima por dentro y fuera*. On criticism of the city, see Gehbald, 'Lima Inside and Out'.

[20] Leonard, *Books of the Brave*, 215. 'Transplantation' is a much-contested concept in today's cultural history. On the historical perspective of entanglement with a focus on exchange and connections instead and as key concept of global history, see Conrad, *What Is Global History?*, 9–14. For criticism from the anthropologist's viewpoint, see Nicholas, *Entangled Objects*. Placing patronage and (non-)conforming conventions regarding the 'Old World' in a broad context, Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic*, 248–251.

[21] The colonial-era illustrations by the indigenous chronicler are an oft-cited key source for the study of *khipus*, for example: Quispe-Agnoli, 'Cuando Occidente y los Andes se encuentran'. On the continuity of the use of *khipus*, see Salomon, *Los Quipocamayos*; Charles, 'Unreliable Confessions'; Mackey, 'The Continuing Khipu Traditions'.

FIGURE 0.1 The indigenous administrator holding a *khipu* and a book for accounting. Regidores: tenga libro qvipo cv[en]ta, surcococ [administrator]. Guaman Poma de Ayala, *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, c. 1615, 800. GKS 2232 kvart, Royal Danish Library.

Early modern European conceptions of the book excluded Amerindian writing practices and sign carriers, such as the *khipu*. Renaissance philosophies followed a paradigmatic vision that writing was alphabetic, used for medieval manuscripts and printed books, and

had a particular material appearance.[22] While there is a wide debate about the sophistication of pre-colonial writing systems,[23] we tend to take for granted the definition of what a book was. Today's terminology is quite exclusive in comparison to the historical use of the word 'book', however. In archival inventories we often find under the heading 'Books' (*Libros*) a broad range of media, from multiple-folio volumes and editions bound in parchment, potentially handwritten, to single printed sheets and illustrated prints (*estampas*).[24] The many vendors of books in late colonial Lima would never have catalogued 'popular books' or 'cheap prints' separately, nor would they have sorted their stock by author name. The only sorting criteria frequently used were determined by the format and the material of the binding. By employing a historical scope and hence a comprehensive definition of the term 'book', this study incorporates a number of different print publications, calling them 'printed commodities' and 'reading material' with an inclusive understanding.

The book as an object together with the printing press as a tool brought profound transformations for societies, a process that has been addressed with the all-encompassing concepts of *culture livresque*, as studied by Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, or 'print culture' as proposed by Elisabeth Eisenstein.[25] If we are to understand print culture during the Age of Enlightenment in the Viceroyalty of Peru, it is essential to study the logistics of production and the commercial contexts, as it

[22] Mignolo, 'Signs and Their Transmission'. The case in Peru, with the incompatibility between the *khipu* and European conceptions of the book, differed greatly from the case in New Spain, where Mexican 'books' – codices with images and logograms on pages – became much earlier an object of Spanish destruction campaigns: Cummins, 'Representation', 192–199. On the appropriation and early uses of alphabetic writing by indigenous people, see Lienhard, 'Writing from Within'.

[23] For an overview, see Boone and Mignolo, *Writing without Words*. On eighteenth-century European interpretations of pre-colonial writing and recording systems, see Cañizares Esguerra, *How to Write the History*, 60–129.

[24] For provoking arguments on a definition of books, see López, 'Libros y papeles'. Text and material object could have various relations, with 'volume' referring to a single book as part of a larger collection of one title, the modern term 'edition' to all copies of a book printed from the same type setting, and 'copy' to a particular item.

[25] Febvre and Martin, *L'apparition du livre*, 17; Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, 43–136. The term stimulated a long line of research on the implications of print in all domains of life – public and private, spiritual and material – as studied prominently by Chartier, 'Print Culture'. On the origins of the concept, see McDowell, 'Towards a Genealogy'. For a critique of Eisenstein, portraying print culture in the making, see Johns, *The Nature of the Book*. On the usefulness and limitations of the concept, see Love, 'Early Modern Print Culture'.